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SOUTH SEAS GOLD

A Complete Novel of the Fiji Islands

By CRAWFORD SULLIVAN

LACEY OF THE LEGION

**By JACKSON
COLE**

**A THRILLING
PUBLICATION**

THE DEVIL'S STOWAWAY

A Novelet of Jungle Horror

By JOE ARCHIBALD



MAKE YOUR OWN RECORDS AT HOME

THINK OF IT! I JUST MADE
THIS RECORD WITH THE
NEW HOME RECORDO!

IT'S WONDERFUL
—AND SO SIMPLE
—PLEASE LET ME
MAKE A RECORD.

YES, BOB, AND
IT SURE SOUNDS
LIKE YOUR VOICE!



With HOME RECORDO you can make a record of your singing, talking, reciting or instrument playing right in your own home, too! No longer need the high prices of recording machines or studio facilities prevent you or your family or friends from hearing their own voices or playing. No experience necessary. No "mike" fright to worry about. No complicated gadgets. In a jiffy you can set up HOME RECORDO, play or sing or talk, and immediately you have a record which you and your friends can hear as often as you wish.

CHARLIE BARNET
*and other famous orchestra
leaders use*
HOME RECORDO

YOU TOO CAN MAKE RECORDS RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOME

Everything is included. Nothing else to buy and nothing else to pay. You get complete HOME RECORDING UNIT, which includes special recording needle, playing needles, 6 two-sided unbreakable records. Also spiral feeding attachment and combination recording and playback unit suitable for recording a skit, voice, instrument or radio broadcast. **ADDITIONAL, 2-SIDED BLANK RECORDS COST ONLY 75c per dozen.**



Charlie Barnett in his private hotel suite checking a duet by Judy Ellington and Larry Taylor, Vocalists in his band.

HAVE RECORDING PARTIES

You'll get a real thrill out of HOME RECORDING. Surprise your friends by letting them hear your voice or playing right from a record. Record a snappy talking feature. Record jokes and become the life of the party. Great to help train your voice and to cultivate speech. Nothing to practice... you start recording at once... everything necessary included. Nothing else to buy. Just sing, speak or play and HOME RECORDO unit, which operates on your electric or hand-winding type phonograph, will do the recording on special blank records we furnish. You can immediately play the records back as often as you wish. Make your HOME MOVIE a talking picture with Home Recordo. Simply make the record while filming and play back while showing.



Judy Ellington heard in Charlie Barnett's Band making a Home Recordo record for her personal album.

SEND NO MONEY! HURRY COUPON! START RECORDING AT ONCE!

HOME RECORDING CO.
STUDIO KL, 11 WEST 17TH ST.
New York, N. Y.

Send entire HOME RECORDING OUTFIT (including 6 two-sided records) described above, by return mail. I will pay postman \$2.98, plus postage, on arrival. (Send cash or money order now for \$3.00 and save postage.)

Send doz. additional blank records at \$.75 per dozen.

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Operates on Your A.C. or D.C. Electric Phonographs, Record Players, Radio-Phono Combinations, or Hand Winding Phonographs and Portables

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**INCLUDING SIX TWO-SIDED
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HOME RECORDING CO.

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NEW YORK, N. Y.

Accountancy Home-Study

made interesting and practical thru problem method

YOU know as well as we do that Accountancy fits many men for positions that pay three and five and ten thousand dollars a year—gives many other men unusual opportunity to start a profitable growing business of their own.

You probably realize also that—because of the new state and federal legislation—the accounting profession faces now and for the next few years the greatest opportunity it has ever had.

The only question is—just how practical is it for you to train yourself adequately in Accountancy through home study?

And the answer lies in the LaSalle Problem Method.

For this modern plan of training not only makes Accountancy study at home thoroughly practical but makes it interesting as well.

And here's how:

You Learn by Doing

Suppose it were your privilege every day to sit in conference with the auditor of your company or the head of a successful accounting firm. Suppose every day he were to lay before you in systematic order the various problems he is compelled to solve, and were to explain to you the principles by which he solves them. Suppose that one by one you were to work those problems out—returning to him every day for counsel and assistance—

Granted that privilege, surely your advancement would be faster by far than that of the man who is compelled to pick up his knowledge by study of theory alone.

Under the LaSalle Problem Method you pursue, to all intents and purposes, that identical plan. You advance by solving problems.

Only—instead of having at your command the counsel of a single individual—one accountant—you have back of you the organized experience of a great business

training institution, the authoritative findings of scores of able accounting specialists, the actual procedure of the most successful accountants.

Thus—instead of fumbling and blundering—you are coached in the solving of the very problems you must face in the higher accounting positions or in an accounting practice of your own. Step by step, you work them out for yourself—until, at the end of your training, you have the kind of ability and experience for which business is willing and glad to pay real money—just as it was glad to pay these men.*

Five Men Who Tested and Proved It for You

For instance, there was the man who started Accountancy training with us in 1916. After a short period of study, he took a position as bookkeeper for a year, and then became accountant for a leading automobile manufacturer—with two bookkeepers under him. He became auditor of one of the foremost banks in his state with a salary 325 percent larger than when he started training.

He wrote, "My training is the best investment I've ever made, showing a cash value running into five figures."

And the young clerk, earning \$75 a month eleven years ago and later getting many times that as general auditor for an outstanding, nation-wide organization. Within six months after he began our training, he was earning \$125 a

month and within four years, he was earning \$250.

Do you wonder that he wrote, "While LaSalle ads once seemed like fairy tales to me, now I know from personal experience that they are true."

Or let us tell you about two men—one a stenographer and the other a retail clerk—neither of whom knew more than the simplest elements of bookkeeping. One became the comptroller and the other the assistant comptroller of a large company.

"LaSalle training in Higher Accountancy," wrote both, "was the important factor in our rapid climb."

And if you are thinking about the C. P. A. degree and a public accounting business of your own, read about the pharmacist who was earning \$30 a week some years ago when a LaSalle registrar secured his enrollment for Accountancy training. Eight months later he left the drug store to take a bookkeeping job at \$20 a week—less money but larger opportunity. Three years later he passed the C.P.A. examination and a year later yet he was earning \$5,000 a year. Now he has his own highly successful public accounting firm for which he says, "My LaSalle training has been largely responsible."

One-Tenth of All C. P. A.'s Are LaSalle Trained

If you want still more proof, remember that over 1800 C.P.A.'s—approximately one-tenth of all those in the United States who have ever passed the difficult examination for this coveted degree—are LaSalle alumni.

And knowing these facts, ask yourself if there can be any further question about the practicability of this training for you—ask rather if the real question is not about the size of your own ambition and the quality of your determination.

For Accountancy is no magic wand for the lazy or the fearful or the quitter—it offers success only to the alert adult who has the courage to face the facts and the will to carry on till the job is done.

If you are that individual, the coupon below, filled out and mailed, will bring you free the information that may open up to you the future of which you have dreamed—ability and income and success.

Is it not worth getting that information?



Send for
This Book

*Names and addresses given on request.

LaSalle Extension University

A Correspondence Institution

4101 S. Michigan Ave., Dept. 8329-HR, Chicago, Ill.

Please send me, free of all cost or obligation, your 48-page, illustrated book "Accountancy, the Profession That Pays," telling about the profession of accountancy and your training for success in that field.

Name.....

Address.....City.....

Position.....Age.....



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J. S. WILLIAMS, Editor

THRILLING ADVENTURES

Vol. XXXIV, No. 3

AUGUST, 1940

Price 10c



SOUTH SEAS GOLD

A Complete Novel

By CRAWFORD SULLIVAN

A Race for Buried Treasure Speeds Jackson Chase Through a Haunted Tropic Night in the Fiji Islands! Follow this Intrepid American as He Fights Against Desperate Odds

14

CAJUN PROPHECY (Louisiana) Frederick C. Painton

In the Heart of the Swamplands a Doctor Opposes Weird Voodoo

42

LACEY OF THE LEGION (Sahara Desert) Jackson Cole

A Legionnaire Moves Swiftly to Smash at Conspiring Foes!

52

THIRTEEN MEN IN A BOAT (Navy Crew) Allan R. Bosworth

Stroke Kirby Rests on His Oars—Until He Catches a Crab

61

THE DEVIL'S STOWAWAY (New Guinea) Joe Archibald

When a Witch Doctor Conspires with a Sailor, Murderers are Left at Sea with Crawling Horror in the Bowels of their Ship! [A Complete Novelet]

72

NOBILE OF THE "ITALIA" (Norway) Charles S. Strong

The Latest in a Series of Thrilling Adventures from the Pages of History—the Inside Story of a Polar Expedition Long Shrouded in Mystery

90

DEATH HAUNTS THE ICEFIELD Harold F. Cruickshank

Survival of the Fittest is the Code of the Canadian Wilds

96

THE GLOBE TROTTER A Department

Where Editor and Readers Meet. Join Our World-wide Club

106

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PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.



I Jumped My Pay from \$18 to \$50 a Week!

Here's how I did it

by S. J. E.
(NAME AND ADDRESS
SENT UPON REQUEST)



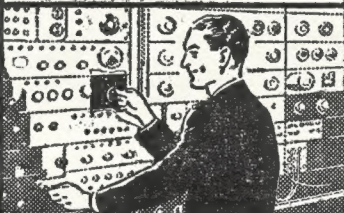
"I had an \$18 a week job in a shoe factory. I'd probably be at it today if I hadn't read about the opportunities in Radio and started training at home for them."



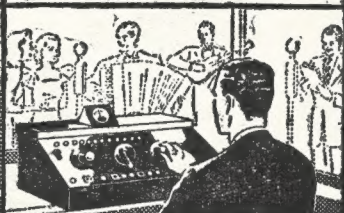
"The training National Radio Institute gave me was so practical I was soon ready to make \$5 to \$10 a week in spare time servicing Radio sets."



"When I finished training I accepted a job as serviceman with a Radio store. In three weeks I was made service manager at more than twice what I earned in the shoe factory."



"Eight months later N. R. I. Employment Department sent me to Station KWCR as a Radio operator. Now I am Radio Engineer at Station WSUL. I am also connected with Television Station W9XK."



"N. R. I. Training took me out of a low-day shoe factory job and put me into Radio at good pay. Radio is growing fast."



J. E. SMITH,
President
National Radio
Institute Estab-
lished 25 years

Find out today how I Train You at Home to BE A RADIO TECHNICIAN

NOW to investigate Radio. Trained Radio Technicians make good money, and you don't have to give up your present job or leave home to learn Radio. I train you at home nights in your spare time.

Why Many Radio Technicians Make \$30, \$40, \$50 a Week

Radio broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, technicians. Radio manufacturers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, servicemen in good-pay jobs. Radio jobbers, dealers, employ installation and servicemen. Many Radio Technicians open their own Radio sales and repair businesses and make \$30, \$40, \$50 a week. Others hold their regular jobs and make \$5 to \$10 a week fixing Radios in spare time. Automobile, Police, Aviation, Commercial Radio; Loudspeaker Systems, Electronic Devices are other fields offering opportunities

for which N. R. I. gives the required knowledge of Radio. Television promises to open many good jobs soon.

Many Make \$5 to \$10 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

The day you enroll, I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets which start showing you how to do Radio repair jobs. Throughout your Course I send plans and directions which have helped many make \$200 to \$500 a year in spare time while learning. I send special Radio equipment to conduct experiments and build circuits. This 50-50 training method makes learning at home interesting, fascinating, practical. I ALSO GIVE YOU A MODERN, PROFESSIONAL ALL-WAVE SET SERVICING INSTRUMENT to

help you make money fixing Radios while learning and equip you for full time work after you graduate.

Find Out What Radio Offers You

Act Today! Mail the coupon for my 64-page book, "Rich Rewards in Radio." It points out Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my Course in Radio and Television; shows more than 100 letters from men I have trained, telling what they are doing and earning. Read my money back agreement. MAIL COUPON in an envelope or paste on a penny postcard—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President,
Dept. OH09, National Radio Institute,
Washington, D. C.

MAIL NOW • Get 64 page book FREE



J. E. Smith, President, Dept. OH09,
National Radio Institute, Washington, D. C.

Mail me FREE, without obligation, your 64-page book, "Rich Rewards in Radio." (No salesman will call. Write plainly.)

Age.....

Name

Address

City State.....

A Money-Making Opportunity for Men of Character

EXCLUSIVE FRANCHISE FOR AN INVENTION EXPECTED TO REPLACE A MULTI-MILLION-DOLLAR INDUSTRY

**Costly Work Formerly
"Sent Out" by Business Men
Now Done by Themselves
at a Fraction of the Expense**

**This is a call for men everywhere to handle
exclusive agency for one of the most
unique business inventions of the day.**

Forty years ago the horse and buggy business was supreme—today almost extinct. Twenty years ago the phonograph industry ran into many millions—today practically a relic. Only a comparatively few foresighted men saw the fortunes ahead in the automobile and the radio. Yet irresistible waves of public buying swept these men to fortune, and sent the buggy and the phonograph into the discard. So are great successes made by men able to detect the shift in public favor from one industry to another.

New another change is taking place. An old established industry—an integral and important part of the nation's structure—in which millions of dollars change hands every year—is in thousands of cases being replaced by a truly astonishing, simple invention which does the work better—more reliably—AND AT A COST OFTEN AS LOW AS 2% OF WHAT IS ORDINARILY PAID! It has not required very long for men who have taken over the rights to this valuable invention to do a remarkable business, and show earnings which in these times are almost unheard of for the average man.

**Not a "Gadget"—
Not a "Knick-Knack"—**

*but a valuable, proved device which
has been sold successfully by business
novices as well as seasoned
veterans.*

Like no mistake—this is no novelty—no flimsy creation which the inventor hopes to put on the market. You probably have seen nothing like it yet—perhaps never dreamed of the existence of such a device—yet it has already been used by corporations of outstanding prominence—by dealers of great corporations—by their branches—by doctors, newspapers, publishers—schools—hospitals, etc., etc., and by thousands of small business men. You don't have to convince a man that he should use an electric bulb to light his office instead of a gas lamp. Nor do you have to sell the same business man the idea that some day he may need something like this invention. The need is already there—the money is usually being spent right at that very moment—and the desirability of saving the greatest part of this expense is obvious immediately.

**Some of the Savings
You Can Show**

You walk into an office and put down before your prospect a letter from a sales organization showing that they did work in their own office for \$11 which formerly could have cost them over \$200. A building supply corporation pays our man \$70, whereas the bill could have been for \$1,600! An automobile dealer pays our representative \$15, whereas the expense could have been over \$1,000. A department store has expense of \$68.60, possible cost if done outside the business being well over \$1,000. And so on. We could not possibly list all cases here. These are just a few of the many actual cases which we place in your hands to work with. Practically every line of business and every section of the country is represented by these field reports which hammer across dazzling, convincing money-saving opportunities which hardly any business man can fail to understand.

**Profits Typical of
the Young, Growing Industry**

Go! into this business is not like selling something offered in every grocery, drug or department store. For instance, when you take a \$7.50 order, \$5.83 can be your share. On \$1,500 worth of business, your share can be \$1,167.00. The very least you get as your part of every dollar's worth of business you do is 67 cents—on ten dollars' worth \$6.70, on a hundred dollars' worth \$67.00—in other words two thirds of every order you get is yours. Not only on the first order—but on repeat orders—and you have the opportunity of earning an even larger percentage.

**This Business Has
Nothing to Do With
House to House Canvassing**

Nor do you have to know anything about high-pressure selling. "Selling" is unnecessary in the ordinary sense of the word. Instead of hammering away at the customer and trying to "force" a sale, you make a dignified, business-like call, leave the installation—whatever size the customer says he will accept—at our risk, let the customer sell himself after the device is in and working. This does away with the need for pressure on the customer—it eliminates the handicap of trying to get the money before the customer has really convinced himself 100%. You simply tell what you offer, showing proof of success in that customer's particular line of business. Then leave the invention without a dollar down. It starts working at once. In a few short days, the installation should actually produce enough cash money to pay for the deal, with profits above the investment coming in at the same time. You then call back, collect your money. Nothing is so convincing as our offer to let results speak for themselves without risk to the customer! While others fail to get even a hearing, our men are making sales running into the hundreds. They have received the attention of the largest firms in the country, and sold to the smallest businesses by the thousands.

EARNINGS

One man in California earned over \$1,600 per month for three months—close to \$5,000 in 90 days' time. Another writes from Delaware—"Since I have been operating (just a little less than a month of actual selling) and not the full day at that, because I have been getting organized and had to spend at least half the day in the office; counting what I have sold outright and on trial, I have made just a little in excess of one thousand dollars profit for one month." A man working small city in N. Y. State made \$10,805 in 9 months. Texas man nets over \$300 in less than a week's time. Space does not permit mentioning here more than these few random cases. However, they are sufficient to indicate that the worthwhile future in this business is coupled with immediate earnings for the right kind of man. One man with us has already made over a thousand sales on which his earnings ran from \$5 to \$60 per sale and more. A great deal of this business was repeat business. Yet he had never done anything like this before coming with us. That is the kind of opportunity this business offers. The fact that this business has attracted to it such business men as former bankers, executives of businesses—men who demand only the highest type of opportunity and income—gives a fairly good picture of the kind of business this is. Our door is open, however, to the young man looking for the right field in which to make his start and develop his future.

No Money Need Be Risked

In trying this business out. You can measure the possibilities and not be out a dollar. If you are looking for a business that is not overworked—a business that is just coming into its own—on the upgrade, instead of the downgrade—a business that offers the buyer relief from a burdensome, but unavoidable expense—a business that has a prospect practically in every office, store, or factory into which you can set foot—regardless of size—that is a necessity but does not have any price cutting to contend with as other necessities do—that because you control the sales in exclusive territory is your own business—that pays more on some individual sales than many men make in a week and sometimes in a month's time—if such a business looks as if it is worth investigating, get in touch with us at once for the rights in your territory—don't delay—because the chances are that if you do wait, someone else will have written to us in the meantime—and if it turns out that you were the better man—we'd both be sorry. So for convenience, ask the coupon below—but send it right away—or write if you wish. But do it now. Address

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Dept. 4047H, Mobile, Ala.**

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Without obligation to me, send me full information on your proposition.

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\$6.85
to
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Choose FOR YOURSELF FALSE TEETH

AT
Amazingly Low Prices
—BY MAIL—
SEND NO MONEY



Posed by a Professional Model

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BEFORE

AFTER



Mrs. Elsie Boland of Norton, Kansas, writes:

"Enclosed find two pictures. One shows how I looked before I got my teeth; the other one afterwards. Your teeth are certainly beautiful. I have not had mine out since the day I got them, except to clean them."



Harry Willoughby, Adairville, Kentucky, writes:

"I have received my teeth and am PROUD OF THEM."

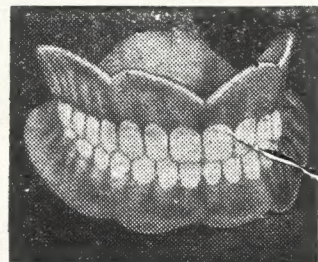


Mrs. Geo. G. Conklin, Bridgeport, Connecticut, writes:

"I received my set of teeth. I wear them day and night. I have good reason to be well pleased with them. Thank you very much."

MADE - TO - MEASURE DENTAL PLATES DIRECT FROM OUR LABORATORY TO YOU!

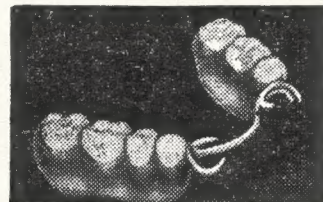
We make to measure for you individually—BY MAIL—Dental Plates for men and women—from an impression of your own mouth taken by you at your home. We have thousands of customers all over the country wearing teeth we made by mail at sensible prices.



HAND-CARVED SET

AT ROCK-BOTTOM PRICES

If you find out what others have paid for theirs, you will be astounded when you see how little ours will cost you! By reading our catalog, you will learn how to save half or more on dental plates for yourself. Monthly payments possible.



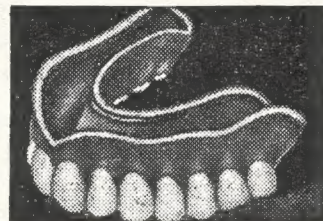
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ON 60 DAYS' TRIAL

Make us prove every word we say. Wear our teeth on trial for as long as 60 days. Then, if you are not perfectly satisfied with them, they will not cost you a cent.

WITH MONEY - BACK GUARANTEE OF SATISFACTION

We take this risk. We guarantee that if you are not completely satisfied with the teeth we make for you, then any time within 60 days we will immediately refund every cent you have paid us for them. We take your word. You are the judge.



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Send, without obligation, your FREE impression material, catalog, and information.

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Dr. Ernest French, Supervisor of Laboratory
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WITH ANY REMINGTON PORTABLE TYPEWRITER

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To help you even further, you get Free with this special offer a 24-page booklet, prepared by experts, to teach you quickly how to typewrite by the touch method. When you buy a Noiseless you get this free Remington Rand gift that increases the pleasure of using your Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable. Remember, the touch typing book is sent Free while this offer holds.

SPECIAL CARRYING CASE

The Remington Deluxe Noiseless Portable is light in weight, easily carried about. With this offer Remington supplies a beautiful carrying case sturdily built of 3-ply wood bound with a special Dupont Fabric.

SPECIFICATIONS

ALL ESSENTIAL FEATURES of large standard office machines appear in the Noiseless Deluxe Portable—standard 4-row keyboard; back spacer; margin stops and margin release; double shift key; two color ribbon and automatic reverse; variable line spacer; paper fingers; makes as many as seven carbons; takes paper 9.5" wide; writes lines 8.2" wide, black key cards and white letters, rubber cushioned feet.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

The Remington Noiseless Deluxe Portable Typewriter is sold on a trial basis with a money-back guarantee. If, after ten days trial, you are not entirely satisfied, we will take it back, paying all shipping charges and refunding your good will deposit at once. You take no risk.



ACT NOW!

ON THIS BARGAIN
OFFER.

THE COMBINATION FOR AS LITTLE AS 10c A DAY

How easy it is to pay for this combination. Just imagine! A small good will deposit and terms as low as 10c a day to get this combination at once. You will never miss 10c a day. Become immediately the possessor of this combination. You assume no obligation by sending the coupon.



SEND COUPON

NOW!

Remington Rand Inc. Dept. 169-8
465 Washington St., Buffalo, N. Y.

Tell me, without obligation, how to get a Free Trial of a new Remington Noiseless Deluxe Portable, including Carrying Case and Free Typing Booklet, for as little as 10c a day. Send Catalogue.

Name.....

Address.....

City.....State.....

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Strange Secrets that provide
a Master Formula to a

**LIFE OF WEALTH • LOVE •
HEALTH • HAPPINESS
and PROSPERITY!**



THE KEY TO SUPREME MASTERY UNLOCKS THE DOOR TO YOUR LATENT POWERS

Through countless ages in every ancient land there have been infinitely wise men who were the oracles of their times. These men performed long hidden rites which they closely guarded. Through the practice of *Eclecticism*—a system of philosophic knowledge—they were enabled to perform amazing feats—miracles which people could not understand. All of them had the power to **ACHIEVE THAT WHICH THEY DESIRED!**

Now, in a sensational new book, "THE DOORWAY TO YOUR SUCCESS", a simple explanation is given to these long hidden secrets. For the first time it is told how you, too, may "get out of the shadows and into the light of understanding"; how you can *Control Your Destiny* by breaking the shackles which bind the hidden powers within YOU!

**WRITTEN FOR MEN AND WOMEN WHOSE
MOST PRESSING NEED IS FOR MONEY!**

Long hidden under high sounding names and cloaked by mysterious rites, this amazing book reveals that almost any person of ordinary intelligence can achieve untold success by utilizing the simple rules of Universal Nature. You are shown, step by step, how to put into practice certain fundamental principles which will help you solve your problems of Health, Business Success,

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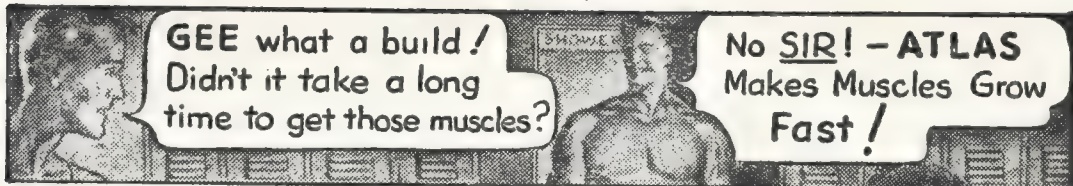
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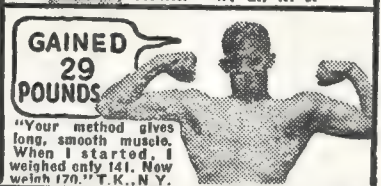
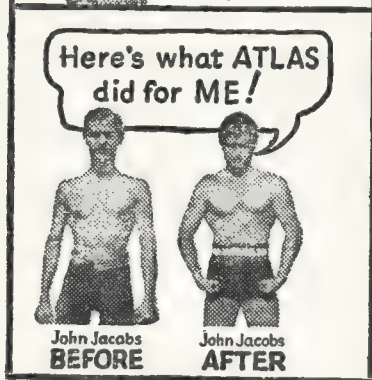
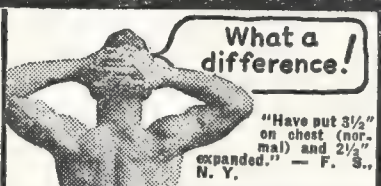
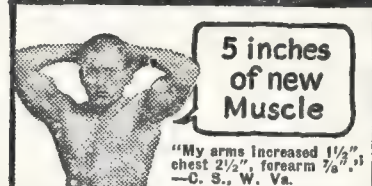
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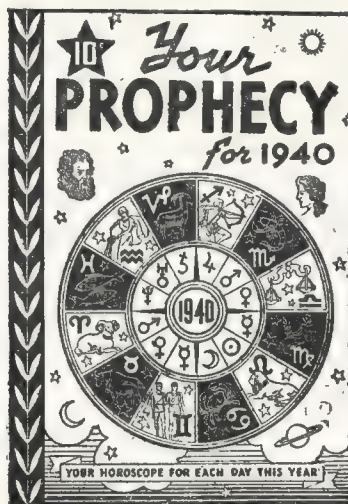
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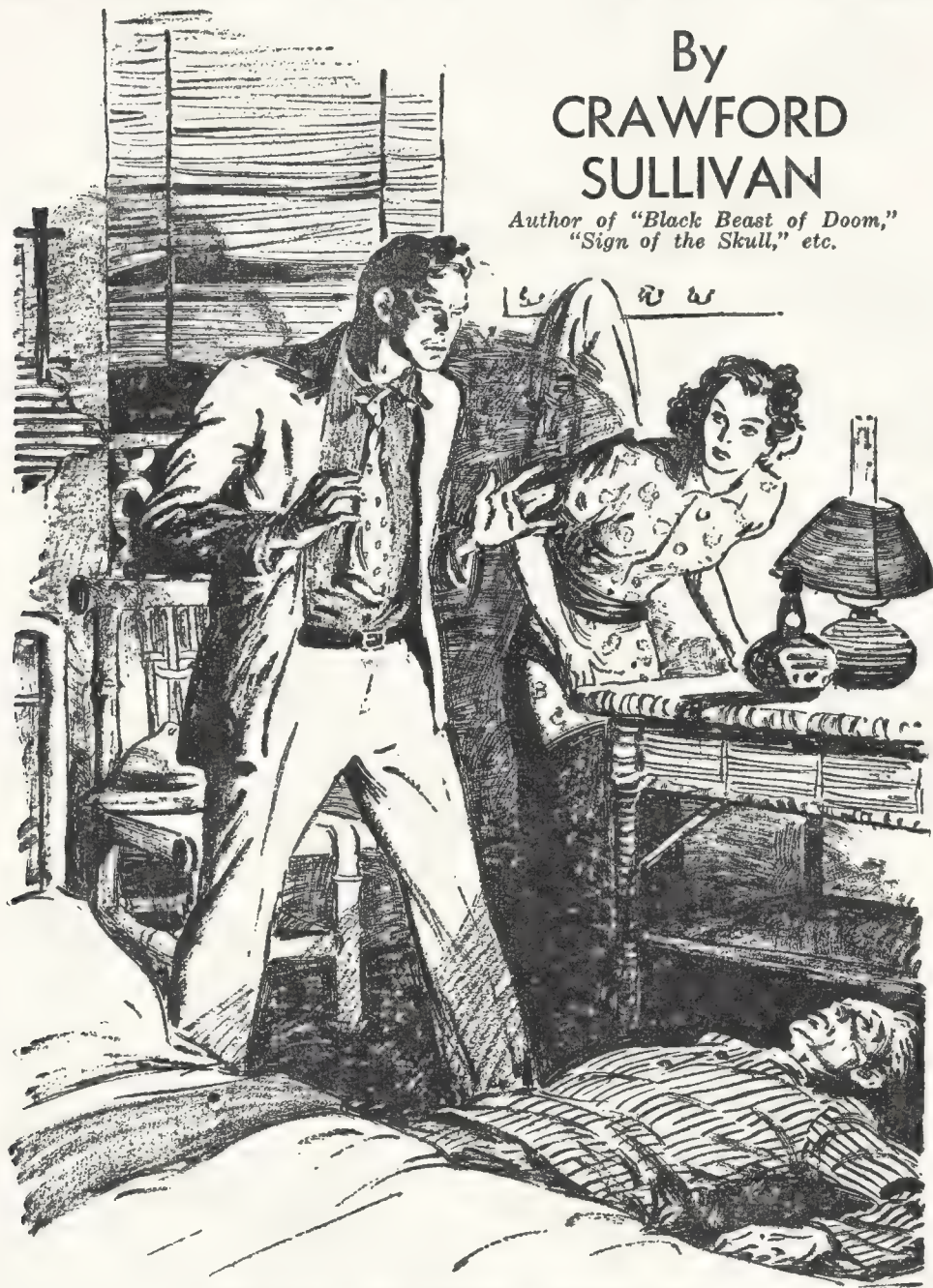
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SOUTH SEAS

By
CRAWFORD
SULLIVAN

*Author of "Black Beast of Doom,"
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Freeing the girl, Chase looked into a wobbly gun barrel

A Race for Buried Treasure Speeds Jackson

GOLD

CHAPTER I

A Puddle of Blood

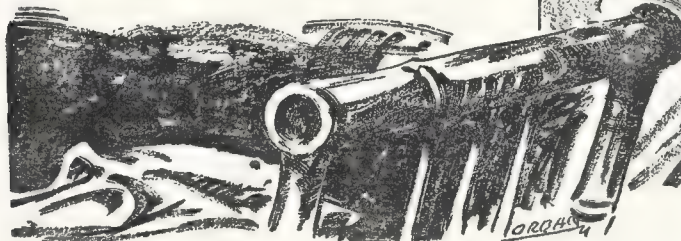
HER sides caked with the salt of a summer sea, the *Aorangi* nosed around the southeastern bulge of Viti Levu and into Suva Harbor. Jackson Chase was standing on A Deck as the vessel slipped through the reef-locked channel. His eyes were narrow inquisitive slits, but the muscles of his brown face seemed loose with contentment.

A tiny launch manned by two frizzy-headed natives in red *sulus* chugged alongside. Chase watched them heave the mail aboard, brown arms rippling with strength.

As the ship edged up to the wharf, he got his first close look at Fiji. It was noon, and the entire landscape was drenched in a living sunlit green which clashed against the vivid red rooftops of the dock sheds.

Only on the wharf was the green obliterated. Stalwart Fijians, Indian women in pink and white veils, bearded Sikh constables, and customs

A Complete Novel of the Fiji Islands



Crاندall looked frightened, even with the drop on the American

Chase Through a Haunted Tropic Night!

officials wearing white drill with gold trimmings, these were but a part of the moving pageant of color. One look, and Jackson Chase was glad he had come to the South Seas.

Only three passengers were landing, so he went through immigration quickly. A sweltering hour in the customs shed, and his luggage was piled into an ancient taxi. Chase climbed in beside the Indian driver, consulted a notebook.

"Hotel Metropolitan," he said.

The driver made his cab roar into action. Barreling down the left side of the road, he took a corner on two wheels and squealed the car to a halt about a block and a half from where they had started.

"Hotel Met'pol'tan," smiled the cabman. "Four shillings please."

Chase knew he was being swindled, but he paid anyway. Then he went into the hotel to look for a drink.

The Hotel Metropolitan was a perfectly square building with a flat roof and a balcony over the sidewalk. It had once been a warehouse, and it stood next to a row of copra sheds, which made it the familiar habitat of copra bugs and six-legged spiders.

All rooms were on the upper floor, and the lower part was composed of a dining room, lounge and manager's quarters. Indian waiters, with box hats and green sashes, paddled back and forth on bare feet or stood in some dark corner waiting to pop out and be helpful.

SITTING in the lounge, Jackson Chase consumed five gin-and-squashes. As he was ordering the sixth, one of the waiters tapped him on the shoulder.

"Sahib Chase? You come weeth me, please?"

The waiter led him up a narrow staircase and down the hallway to Room Eight.

"Sahib Martin's room," said the Indian. "He tell me to tell you to come in."

Chase entered without knocking. The room was a bare, high-ceilinged cubicle overlooking a canal. An old man with bright blue eyes and hatchety features lay on the bed.

"I've been waiting for you," said the man grumpily.

"And I've been downstairs for the past hour," replied Chase. "My only instruction was to come to the Hotel Metropolitan."

"Canadian, eh?" Martin's voice had the tone of a field officer denouncing a spy.

"American," corrected Chase. "The International Investment Company has offices in Vancouver and Portland. I'm from the Portland office."

"You're damned young," said Martin. "Sit down."

There was no place to sit, so Chase perched himself on top of the bureau. The home office had warned him that Geoffrey Martin was slightly eccentric.

"Let's get down to cases," said Chase. "You want my firm to invest a hundred thousand pounds in the Martin Sugar Refineries. You've agreed to put up another hundred thousand, and both parties will share fifty-fifty in the profits."

"Righto," said Martin. "I suppose you've come here purposely to look over our books."

"I'm no clerk," Chase told him. "That kind of investigation has already been done, secretly. I'm here to look for things that don't appear in figures. In the first place, you've got a competitor, the Inter-Island Refineries."

"Plenty of room here for both companies," said Martin imperturbably.

"Also, you've been having labor trouble."

"Only temporary," Martin assured him. "For some reason we've got on the wrong side of that blasted Indian, A. P. Patel. As you may know, we're forced to use East Indian labor entirely. The Fijians won't work. Patel is head of the Indian Party, and he's

got it into his thick head that I'm trying to ruin the Inter-Island company and cut wages. I'd like to have that Hindu alone for just two minutes." He clenched one fist meaningly.

"Another thing," added Chase. "We've investigated your bank account and found that you haven't more than fifty pounds to your name. Where do you expect to get a hundred thousand cash?"

Geoffrey Martin stretched, watched a fly buzzing around inside the mosquito netting.

"I don't trust banks," he said. "When the time comes, I can produce a hundred thousand pounds—in gold!"

"You're more of a crackpot than I expected," said Chase candidly.

Martin appeared flattered. "Can you produce a hundred thousand in gold?" he asked pointedly. "When I first came to Fiji, I was broke. I've made money and lots of enemies. I've also had lots of fun. What was that you called me?"

"A crackpot," said Chase, removing himself from the bureau. "How's about talking business after supper?"

"Not on Thursday," objected Martin. "This is my evening to relax at the local pubs. I have a home, understand, but I always come to the hotel on Thursday night to spare my daughter the pain of seeing her father under the weather. Care to join me?"

"No, thanks," replied Chase. "For two weeks I've tried to fit a six-foot-one body into a five-foot-eleven bunk. This is my night to sleep. If you want me for anything, I'll be in the room next door."

"I won't want you tonight," said Martin positively. "Cheerio!"

AFTER supper Chase started on a walk about town. Devoid of tourists, Suva seemed extremely dead. The seaside benches along Victoria Parade were occupied by jabbering natives and a few mopy Europeans.

Fijian constables in blue coats and scalloped skirts strode past the shops



Jackson Chase

importantly. A strong spicy scent greeted him as he ambled up the Street of All Nations. Woolly-headed children romped in the gutters, Indians argued belligerently, and a phonograph with a morning glory horn blared a dissonant Hindu chant.

It was almost nine o'clock when he returned to his room. Crawling under the mosquito netting, he tried to read a book by the single feeble globe which hung from the ceiling. Outside a group of natives were splashing and shouting in the canal. A little after ten Geoffrey Martin came down the hall, evidently assisted by one of his drinking companions.

"You're wrong, Scotty," Martin protested loudly. "Forsythe's not to blame."

"Easy, Jeff," cautioned his companion in a raspy voice. "Thass not your room. Room Eight's next door."

"Should we go back an' have another bucket of blood?" suggested Martin. "I'm sober."

"Pub's closed," was the reply. "Here's eight. You're drunk enough already."

"Poor old Forsythe!" sighed Mar-

tin. "His wife ran away with a sailor three years ago. Who's drunk?"

"Both of us," said the other man. "What were you saying about that swine, Forsythe?"

The conversation went on in the same disconnected vein for about five minutes. A door slammed, and Martin's friend clumped down the hall singing. The singing was terminated by a thumping clatter as the man tumbled the entire length of the staircase.

Chase arose, clicked out the light and lay back against the pillows. He had heard that the South Seas sapped a man's energy, but he never knew it could happen so quickly. A cool breeze fluttered the palms, and it began to rain—first a muttering drizzle and then a crashing downpour that flooded the drainspouts. Chase intended to put on his pajamas, but the rain had a hypnotic effect, sweeping away all consciousness and weighting his eyelids.

When Chase awoke, he sat stiffly upright in the bed. Above the sound of rain came a muffled groan. He listened intently. The groaning seemed to come through the wall. He went into the hallway, noticed that the door to Room Eight was half open. The groans had changed to a low, throaty rattle.

He peered into Martin's room, and the hair on his neck prickled up.

Geoffrey Martin lay on the floor in a puddle of blood, his legs under the bed and his face seamed with pain. Chase lifted the man's shoulders. A thin, dark line was forming in one corner of Martin's mouth, and the light from the hall made his eyes look like shining hemispheres.

"Who did it?" said Chase gutturally.

"Pines . . ." came the gasping reply. "Pines—Rama!"

Chase let him slump back gently. Turning on his knees, he felt his fingers touch something smooth. He picked it up, turned on the light and

saw that it was a thin-bladed knife with an ivory handle.

Instantly he was aware of someone watching him from the doorway—a girl, her eyes wide, her lips trembling. He dropped the knife and stepped backward as she leaped at him tigerishly. Long, slender fingers clawed his face, the nails ripping a gash down his temple. He seized her arms and pinned them behind her back. The girl screamed, tried to wriggle free and dug her heels viciously into his shins.

"Cut it out, you wildcat!" he grunted. "Want me to sock you?"

"You've killed him!" she shrieked. "You killed my father!"

CHASE never knew that a pint-sized young woman could be so vicious. Her screams shrilled down the quiet corridor like a cat fight in a city morgue. He considered laying an easy but silencing punch to her jaw; then realized it would make his own situation harder to explain. After all, she had seen him standing over Martin's body with a blood-stained knife.

"Up with your 'ands, Guv'nor!"

Freeing the girl, Chase looked into a wobbly gun barrel. Behind the gun stood Herbert Tewkes, the hotel manager. Tewkes was round and pudgy, and seemed more frightened of his revolver than of Chase. The girl dropped behind Martin's body and began to sob wretchedly.

"Coo!" gulped Tewkes. "Hit's a murder! Aggie, hurry and call a constable!"

Jackson Chase knew that he was in a bad spot. He had been in worse positions during his career, but this was one that made him feel uncomfortably idiotic. He scratched his head with one upraised hand and tried to figure out some tangible way of establishing his innocence.

He was still figuring when two Sikh constables arrived and took him to the police station.

CHAPTER II

Rita Martin

NEXT morning Chase was hailed before a police magistrate in a worm-eaten courtroom up the hill from the jail. The procedure was solemn but informal.

Chase sat by himself at a desk before the judge's bench. Except for the bailiff, several constables and a few assorted spectators, the courtroom was vacant.

Chase spotted Rita Martin at once, sitting outside the rail, staring blankly ahead. He noticed that her face was heart-shaped and beautifully fragile. Her eyes, though red-rimmed from weeping, had the same determined look that he had seen only yesterday in the eyes of Geoffrey Martin.

Still, the girl possessed none of her father's hard, flinty appearance. Her hair was luxuriantly black, and the short curls glistened against the healthy glow of her cheeks. Chase rubbed the red welt on his temple and ruefully remembered how he had considered giving this tropical angel a sock on the jaw.

A tall man with an iron-gray mustache and a chin that looked like the flat end of an anvil sat next to Rita, his back stiff as a ramrod. He wore an immaculate white suit and a shirt with a starched collar. The man's long patrician face was somewhat austere. It was a bit of a jolt to Chase, then, when the stranger glanced in his direction and gave him a friendly nod. Chase nodded back and then turned his attention to the magistrate.

"Clarence Crandall," called the bailiff.

Down the aisle swaggered a small pug-nosed individual who might have been a beachcomber and whose hair

resembled the bristles of a worn-out broom.

"I'm him," he declared. "But everybody calls me 'Scotty.'"

"Will you tell the court what you know about Geoffrey Martin's death?"

"Martin was my 'cobber,'" said Crandall. "Last night him and me got potted, as we usually do. I brought him to the hotel, an' that's the last I seen of him."

"You left the hotel straightaway?" asked the magistrate.

"Yes, yer Honor," said Crandall sheepishly, "I fell down the stairs."

"That's all."

Rita Martin was called up to the stand next.

"I—I don't quite know what to say," she declared haltingly. "I went to the hotel to find Father. It was rather late. The light in his room was on, and I saw that man standing over his body with a blood-stained knife." She heeled around, staring Chase squarely in the eye.

"Why did you murder him?" she demanded angrily.

The magistrate rapped his gavel.

"Mr. Chase is not on trial," he reminded her. "This is merely a preliminary hearing."

The man with the mustache helped Rita to her chair. Chase's turn came next. He told the truth as sincerely as possible, but even to his own ears the words had a hollow ring. When he finished, he could see that the magistrate was not impressed.

"In view of the evidence presented, I am forced to hold you over for trial," the bewigged justice declared finally. "In a case as serious as this I must fix the bail at a thousand pounds."

Instead of lodging Chase in the Suva jail, they considerably found a small barred room for him in the police station. The judge selected to try the case was on a holiday in New Zealand, which meant that the trial would not take place for three weeks. Chase demanded to see the American

consul and learned that the last one had left three years ago.

HE CONSIDERED cabling the International Investment Company for bail, but he knew that his boss, Bill Cobb, would only chuckle and toss the cablegram in the wastebasket. Cobb would remember that time in Salvador when Chase, acquitted of trying to overthrow the government, had used the company's bail money to stage a *fiesta* for the entire town. No. He would have to swelter behind bars for three weeks and take his chances at the trial.

"You can be fairly certain they won't hang you," confided Chief of Police Harkness. "It would have a bad effect on the natives."

"It'd have a worse effect on me," Chase remarked peevishly.

The police official smiled, went away, and came back shortly, accompanied by a middle-aged man with gold-rimmed spectacles.

"Good news," he announced. "You are to be released. This is Mr. Ellis, the solicitor."

Chase looked the other man up and down. Ellis had sober brown eyes and the confident poise of a lawyer whose briefcase is stuffed with signed pardons.

"Rotten luck you've had," said Ellis sympathetically. "Please don't judge Fiji by this unfortunate . . ."

"Don't apologize," said Chase. "Just get me out."

A Fijian constable unlocked the door. Chase shook hands with Ellis vigorously.

"Ellis," he mused. "Seems I've heard your name mentioned before."

"Probably in the letters to your firm," Ellis replied. "I was Geoffrey Martin's solicitor."

"That's right," said Chase. "Samuel Ellis. But if you were Martin's attorney, how is it you've come to my rescue?"

"I also represent Major Charles Drake," said Ellis. "The major is an

influential landowner here in Fiji, and he has taken a deep interest in your case. He is waiting for us outside."

A midget four-seater stood near the hedge in front of the police station, and at the wheel sat the tall, blunt-jawed man who had accompanied Rita to the hearing. Introductions were curt.

"It didn't take Ellis long to arrange your release," said the major. "I've put a thousand pounds on you, and I hope it will prove a good investment."

"That depends upon what kind of returns you expect," Chase told him.

"Climb in," Drake beckoned. "We can discuss the matter better at my place."

Chase and Ellis piled into the car. About a mile from town Drake turned up a side road and stopped at a rambling white house which stood on the crest of a hill. They entered a spacious room crammed with polished ebony furniture and Indian knickknacks.

The walls were practically hidden by framed oil paintings and watercolors. A saber stood in an umbrella stand, and a Fijian war club hung over the door. Drake tinkled a silver bell and an Indian appeared carrying a trayful of liquor bottles and glasses. The major poured drinks, sat in a high-backed chair and pointed his long forefinger at Chase.

"Tell me the truth," he said gravely. "Did you kill Martin?"

Chase drained his glass. "What happens if I say no?" he inquired.

"I'm afraid I'd believe you," said Drake. "Martin was my best friend, but he had enemies with more reason to kill him than you. When he died in your arms did he say anything?"

CHASE thought it over. "He mumbled something, but I was too excited to pay much attention."

"Aren't you a detective?" Drake asked.

"I'm a financial investigator," said Chase. "Murder's out of my line."

"You're involved in this one," the major reminded him, "and you've got three weeks in which to find the real killer. Last evening I talked with Martin on the telephone, and he told

that were identical. I may be next!"

"What do you suppose is the motive?"

"There could be many motives," said Drake. "I have no heirs, and if I should die unmarried my land will revert to the government. There are



He uncovered a rusty iron box about two feet square

me that you were an exceedingly shrewd young man. I'm relying on my late friend's judgment."

"You must have been very fond of Martin."

"I was," said Drake. "But my reason for wanting to find his murderer is not entirely sentimental. Before he died, he received several threatening notes. I, too, have received notes

many Indians who would like to buy up that land—just as they would like to ruin Martin's sugar mills."

Chase nodded thoughtfully.

"A number of Europeans would like to have Drake's properties also," Ellis added. "And there are men such as that worthless Scotty Crandall who would stop at nothing for a few shillings."

Chase paced the room. "Okay," he agreed. "I'll do my best."

He stopped to look at a bright watercolor which hung near the window. The picture was signed "G. Martin."

"Don't tell me the old gent was an artist?"

"One of the best," asserted Drake. "I have several of his watercolors, but Rita owns all the oils. He painted island scenes for relaxation."

"Seems to me that Martin did a lot of things for relaxation," said Chase. "By the way, do you know of a guy called Forsythe?"

"He's a planter who lives up near Vunindawa," replied Ellis. "Mr. Martin held a mortgage on his plantation. Forsythe only comes to Suva about once a year."

"Remember, I'm gambling on your ability, Chase," said Major Drake, as they were preparing to leave. His long face seemed to be tired and worried. "Not only with my money, but possibly with my life!"

Drake took Chase back to the Hotel Metropolitan. When he entered his room, Chase found all his bags open, their contents distributed across the floor in elegant confusion. A suitcase lay on the bed, and Rita Martin was burrowing into it ruthlessly. At her elbow stood Scotty Crandall.

A TOUGH-LOOKING individual, Crandall had the eyes of a Viking. His body was squat as a chimpanzee's, his mouth, a crooked line slashed by a livid scar. Glaring at Chase silently, Crandall sidled around the bed, his long arms dangling. Rita had taken one of Chase's best shirts from the suitcase and was crumpling it nervously. Chase felt trouble coming, but he was hardly prepared for what happened next.

Crandall left the floor as if hurled by some hidden force, ramming his bullet head into Chase's midsection. Chase said "Oof," and sat on the floor dazedly.

Crandall was all over him in an instant, one hand grasping his collar and a hard left fist throwing rapid punches to Chase's ear. The little man worked with his knees also, churning them into Chase's stomach like pistons. It was a brilliant, lightning attack, the kind mastered only by years of backroom brawling. Before Chase could return a blow, he was uncomfortably woozy in the midriff and on the verge of being knocked out.

Grabbing his enemy's coat sleeves, Chase pulled Crandall's shoulders against his chest, brought up both legs and managed to plant his feet just above Crandall's belt. For a moment, Crandall was in the position of a man sprawled over a barrel.

It was only for a moment, because Chase's legs straightened with a jerk, and Crandall catapulted backward, his head thumping the wall.

Crandall made another of his jack-in-the-box leaps, this time swinging with both fists. One of the blows jarred Chase's head, but he shook off the punch and came back with a curving left to Crandall's ear. Feet apart, the little man stood still and scowled. The scowl was intended to convey contempt, but it lasted a second too long.

Chase had already started an upper-cut traveling, and it caught Crandall's chin with an explosive crunch. It was like touching a sprig of sensitive grass.

Crandall wilted and was through fighting for the day.

Chase stepped over Scotty Crandall's chunky frame and glowered at Rita Martin.

"Put that shirt down," he ordered. "You've done enough damage."

Rita dropped the crumpled shirt. Chase wondered how a girl with such delicate features could have such a pantherish disposition.

"What did you expect to find in my bags?" he demanded.

"Nothing," said the angry-eyed girl sullenly.

CHAPTER III

Murder at Large

CHASE uncorked a thermos bottle which was on the bureau and poured a stream of icy water over Crandall's face.

"It seems that you two hotheads could find something better to do than burgle a man's room while he's in jail. I'll make you a proposition—"

"Don't listen to him, Rita!"

Crandall had regained consciousness and was raising himself painfully.

Chase kept his eyes fixed on the girl. "Tell me why you came to the hotel at one-thirty this morning in a driving rainstorm," he said acidly. "Your arrival immediately after the murder was most propitious."

"You aren't accusing me of—"

"Turn about's fair play," Chase drawled. "Also, there's a third party to consider. Someone who at this very moment may be . . ." He walked to the door casually, jerked it open.

An Indian, wearing a white coat and green sash, was crouched on the door-sill. He jumped to his feet, and Chase grabbed him by the arm. The Indian made no attempt to struggle.

"Talk fast," said Chase. "And don't tell me you were waiting for a tram."

"I, Hassan," said the Indian. "Houseboy. I come to make bed."

"You have a nice honest face, Hassan," Chase told him. "Like something that ought to be swimming in a swamp. If I catch you at this door again, I'll cut your ears off!"

He swung the Indian around, booted him toward the staircase. Following him down the hall, Chase watched the houseboy clear five steps at a time and disappear into the street.

When he returned to the room, Rita and Crandall were gone. There was an outside stairway at the other end

of the T-shaped hall, and the door to that stairway was open.

Chase sat on the bed, swatted a mosquito absently. The sky beyond the canal had turned gray, and it was beginning to rain again. The air was sticky hot, tainted with the heavy odor of copra.

"Pines," he said aloud. "Rama!"

Those were the last words Geoffrey Martin had spoken. He remembered them now. Martin had been trying to tell him something—something important. The person most likely to solve the riddle was Rita, but Rita in her present state of mind was unapproachable.

"Damn that girl," said Chase, gazing gloomily at the heap of trampled clothing. "I'd like to wring her foolish neck!"

He set to work cleaning up the room. Afterwards, he went to work on other business. It took him several days before he was ready to visit A. P. Patel.

The office of Patel, Indian Representative in the Colonial Legislature, was in the Toorak district, a tenement-like array of hovels scattered about the hump of a hill. A three day rain had made the hill look like a heap of red gelatin about to melt and run all over Suva.

Stepping out of a taxi, Jackson Chase darted under the portico of a ramshackle two-story building that made the Metropolitan Hotel look like Windsor Palace in comparison. The structure was braced on all sides with guy wires, and the exterior had that superb patina of decay which only the tropics can produce.

An Indian store, prepared to sell anything from betel nuts to baby pacifiers, occupied the ground floor. A wormy staircase led to the upper story, and a shingle on the door proclaimed it the lair of A. P. Patel.

It had taken Chase three days to find out all he wanted to know preliminary to making Patel's acquaintance. Climbing the creaky stairway,

he was fully convinced that he was about to meet the prince of scamps.

PATEL was seated behind a battered flat-topped desk pecking at a rusty typewriter. Like most Madrasis, he had the peaked, scrawny look of a man whose ancestors for the last six hundred years had been deprived of Vitamin A. He seemed about forty years old and was probably younger. His dark, shiny face had a high forehead and hollow cheeks. His fingers were pink-tipped claws.

"Come in, Mr. Chase," said Patel, speaking with a slight hissing accent. "I am glad you finally come, although I expect it soon."

"You know me, eh?"

"It is my business to know many things," acknowledged Patel. "You come on a matter concerning the Martin Refineries."

"Before Martin died he intended to expand the refineries, use modern methods, and give the Inter-Island people a run for their money," stated Chase. "You didn't like the idea, did you?"

"I am a servant of my people," returned Patel. "I am interested only in what concerns their welfare."

"You told your people not to work for Martin," continued Chase. "You wanted to keep the company from expanding. Why?"

"My people are sadly oppressed," Patel sighed. "And it is men like Martin who are responsible."

"Putting a sticker in Martin didn't help matters," Chase said with his usual bluntness.

"I did not kill Martin," countered Patel quietly.

"Then perhaps you will help me find out who did."

"I shall consider it a privilege," smiled Patel. "I shall be honored if you will stay for tea."

Chase stayed for tea, but he failed to pry a single morsel of information from Patel's tight jaws. When he left,

it was with the conviction that the Indian had out-manuevered him.

He returned to the hotel, and Herbert Tewkes called his attention to a soiled envelope in the letter rack. It was addressed in a scrawling, almost illegible hand. He opened it and read:

Saib Chase—

Kum pleece to wedding M. Mohandas Singh Toesday neight. Will meat you 8 p.m. sharp in M. Mohandas Singh taylor shop. Can tell hoo endid life of Saib Martin. Pleece make this secrit.

Resptfly,

O. L. Hassan, ex-housboy.

P. S. I am not wurk their now.

Chase read the letter several times before grasping its full significance. The snooping Hassan had possibly stumbled across something of value. He half-regretted booting the Indian down the hall.

Hastening to the nearest Indian tailor shop, Chase purchased a pair of khaki shorts. In the course of the transaction, he learned that the M. Mohandas Singh nuptials had been under way for several days, and that the next night, Tuesday, would mark the arrival of the bride.

Singh's house was across the street and only a short distance from the office of A. P. Patel. The tailor shop faced the street and was separated from the house by at least twenty-five yards.

The rain stopped Tuesday afternoon, and the night beamed clear, with a bright full moon. Wearing his shorts and a *topi*, Chase strolled up Waimanu Road feeling exceedingly cheerful. Fijian bucks greeted him at every street corner with a hearty "*Bula!*", charabancs jammed with singing natives rocketed down the hill, and Samoan boys in Defense Force uniforms strutted past the bulbous Lilac Theater.

There was the smell of coconut oil, the constant *plat-plat* of bare feet. Now and then a pair of dusky, skirted giants swung past him, holding hands and giggling like children. During his

few days in Fiji, Chase had become fond of these huge, ham-footed islanders, whose grandfathers ate each other for breakfast.

As he turned up a side street, the night suddenly became quiet. The street was muddy and littered with enormous toads. He heard the discordant whine of Indian music and knew that the wedding party was not far away.

THEY were all outside on a green lawn covered with a white canopy. The men sat clustered around a kava bowl, and the women squatted

Chase glanced at his watch. It was exactly eight o'clock.

Keeping out of sight, he crept around to the rear of the tailor shop. The back door was locked, but a window was open, so he climbed in easily. The place was stuffy and pitch dark inside.

He groped his way to a side window, raised a bamboo blind. A man in baggy pants could be seen moving away from the noisy celebrators. Chase recognized the man as Hassan, thought he looked rather comically furtive.

A key rattled in the front door.

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BUFFALO MEN



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THRILLING ADVENTURES

across from them, a rectangle of pink, white and blue shawls. Nose ornaments, bangles and toe rings glinted under the gasoline lamps.

A few of the women clinked tiny cymbals while a man squeezed quarter tones out of a wheezy hand organ.

Going around to the back of the house, Chase watched the proceedings unnoticed. The singing, shouting, laughing and cursing rose to a terrific din. Two of the female guests entered into a heated verbal battle and seemed on the verge of mutual mayhem. Violent Hindustani crackled through the air, and the wedding party showed promise of being either a success or a debacle.

Chase clicked the lock and gave the knob a twist.

"It's unlocked, Hassan," he said. "I came in through the back. . ."

A sharp explosion rang in Chase's ears and he saw Hassan spin around, a dark torrent streaming over his face. The Indian's legs buckled, and he pitched forward.

Chase jumped back reflectively, then peered out, searching for some sign of the attacker. The moonlight revealed no tree or bush in the immediate vicinity large enough to conceal a man. And yet a shot had come from up the street, for Hassan lay dead with a bullet through his skull.

Apparently no one in the wedding

party heard the shot or saw the twisted figure of Hassan lying beside the hibiscus bushes. Instead of making an outcry, Chase lit a match and discovered a wall telephone. After spinning the crank about five times, he managed to get connected with the police station. Chief of Police Harkness answered.

"There's been another murder," said Chase. "I'm in the Singh tailor shop above Toorak Road. Hurry up. If these Hindus find the body, they'll think I did it and raise hell!"

"I—I'll be up instantly. Righto!" Harkness said excitedly.

Five minutes later, Harkness arrived in a police car filled with constables. The wedding celebration gave way to cries of anguish as Hassan's body was carried away on a stretcher, and Chase found himself surrounded by sultry-eyed Hindus.

"They're a nasty crowd when they're fired up," Harkness confided. "You'd better come with us to the station."

"Hassan's skull was almost split in half," said Chase, ignoring the chief's suggestion, "and there wasn't a gun within fifty yards of here. The shot seemed to come from a distance—from Patel's office, maybe."

"The building's dark," noted Harkness. "We'll have a look."

An ordinary skeleton key opened the door to Patel's office. Harkness lit an oil lamp, and Chase began to search every drawer and cupboard. A long camphorwood chest stood in the closet above the stairwell. Chase opened it and gave a grunt of satisfaction.

"Here's the weapon," he told Harkness. "A long range rifle with a telescopic sight, guaranteed to shoot the spots off a leopard at two hundred yards."

Harkness took the gun from the chest.

"Serial numbers filed off," he remarked. "The moonlight made it easy for the murderer to pick his . . ."

"Gentlemen, may I have an explanation for this intrusion?"

A. P. Patel came into the room dressed in a wrinkled cotton suit and sandals. His oily hair drooped back over his ears, and his gaze flashed from Chase to Harkness irately.

HARKNESS had little love for Indians, especially Patel.

"You'll do some explaining first, you blighter," he growled. "Where have you been for the past hour?"

"A note was under my door early this morning, and I thought it wise to follow the instructions," said Patel.

He handed a folded paper to the policeman. Chase leaned over Harkness' shoulder. Typewritten on the paper was the message:

Meet me at the cemetery at eight. I can give information regarding Martin's death.
O. L. Hassan.

"Infernally queer!" muttered Harkness. "Both of you getting notes from Hassan to meet him at the same time and at different places."

"Hassan's spelling has improved since yesterday," said Chase. He took a sheet of paper from Patel's desk, zipped it through the rusty typewriter and pecked the keys furiously. "See any resemblance?" he asked Harkness. "I'll eat a Fijian orange if Patel's message wasn't written on his own typewriter."

"You lie," scowled Patel. "I found it under the door."

"I'll have to hold you for illegal possession of a weapon," said Harkness severely. "The murder charges can wait."

Patel turned on Chase, his lips drawn tightly over betel-stained teeth.

"This is a plot against me and my people!" he snarled.

At a nod from Harkness, two husky constables seized Patel's arms and hustled him downstairs.

"A neat job of deduction," the police chief told Chase. "It's evident that Patel killed Martin and then mur-

dered Hassan in self-protection. I was certain that Patel had a finger in this mess."

"I wasn't," said Chase. "It came to me as a complete surprise."

Chase walked back to the hotel alone, and his mind was a turmoil of conflicting thoughts. If Patel had killed Hassan, why had he left the gun in his office? Also, why should he try such a naive trick as writing an alibi note on his own typewriter?

Chase had figured that if Patel were a murderer he would be the slow poison or venomous dart kind, Oriental and subtle. Tussling over these problems, he ascended the hotel stairs and made his way to Room Seven.

The moment he entered the darkened room, he knew that he was not alone. He tried to back out of the door, but a blunt instrument smacked his head, and he crumpled to the floor without a murmur.

CHAPTER IV

Trouble in Nausori



ALTHOUGH the blow was paralyzing, it never quite destroyed Chase's consciousness. He was aware of being tied hand and foot with stout cords, of a gag thrust into his mouth. Two men carried him down

the outside stairway and along the waterfront at the mouth of the canal.

"Did ye get him?"

A man in a launch said that. The launch was moored at a floating wharf.

"Nothing to it, Cap'n," came the reply. "Art and me stashed 'im with a pipe when 'e come in."

The moon glided from behind a cloud, and Chase could make out their faces. Three seafaring men in dungarees, and the man in the boat wore an officer's cap. A pair of muscular hands grasped his shoulders.

"Give a 'and, Art. Lift the beggar's legs."

Unexpectedly, a sizeable boulder sailed through the air, striking Art on the left ear. The seaman wobbled on the edge of the canal, overbalanced, and flopped into the water. The other man dropped Chase's shoulders and pivoted just as Scotty Crandall emerged from the shadow of a copra shed.

Crandall sprang to the attack valiantly, stumpy legs apart and his long arms flailing. The man in the launch leaped ashore, and Crandall went down with two men on top of him.

Rita Martin slid from the shadows like a wraith. Chase rolled over, felt her cool fingers shuttle across his wrists. The ropes binding his arms fell loose. He sat up and unfastened the bonds from his ankles.

Pulling the burly officer off Crandall, Chase lashed a stiff uppercut to the man's spiny jaw. The white cap dropped from his head, and he spread his length in the mud. Crawling and sliding, the officer slithered toward the wharf. Chase skidded in the mire himself and plumped face forward.

The man who had fallen into the canal climbed aboard the launch and kicked over the engine. As he threw off the painter, his two companions tumbled into the boat.

"Stop the blighters!" bawled Crandall.

The motor spluttered, and the launch scooted away from the wharf. Chase's fingers touched the gunwale for an instant, but it jumped from his grasp. The launch was bounding toward a squatty cargo boat in the middle of the bay.

"Those lads are from the *T. V. Sale*," said Crandall. "The big joker is Captain Briggs, a foul rat he is, too. Why were they after you?"

"Search me," said Chase. "I never saw the monkeys before in my life. Looks like I owe you both a vote of thanks."

Rita glanced up at Chase timidly.

"I had a talk with Major Drake this morning," she said. "After he told me how firmly convinced he was of your innocence, I felt that perhaps I'd made a mistake about you. And tonight when I heard about Patel's arrest, I was positive of it. So, straightaway, Scotty and I came to apologize."

"As we came up the stairs, we saw the sailor blokes carryin' you out of the room," added Crandall. "We trailed 'em out the back way, and . . ."

"That ship's pulling anchor!" Chase cut in.

"Bound for China," said Crandall. "That's where you'd have gone—if they hadn't dropped you in the middle of the ocean."

"What could they have gained by kidnaping you?" said Rita wonderingly.

"I'm still out on bail," Chase reminded her. "If I'd disappeared, Major Drake would have forfeited a thousand pounds."

"And everyone would have believed you guilty," Rita added. "Patel must have hired them to do it."

"Possibly," admitted Chase. "Now that we're on speaking terms, maybe you'll tell me why you came to the hotel the night that your father was killed."

"It was because of Mr. Forsythe," she replied. "He came to the house late that night and wanted to see Father. He said that Father had sent him a letter threatening to foreclose his mortgage. When I told him that Father was away for the night, he accused me of lying. For almost an hour he prowled around the house, and once I caught him looking in my window. Naturally, I was frightened, so I stole out the back door and hurried to the hotel."

FORSYTHE'S a bloody welch-er!" exploded Crandall. "He mortgaged his plantation to Martin and refused to pay a penny. What's more, Jeff never sent him any threatening letter. He was too soft-hearted.

That's why he died without a penny to his name."

"What do you mean?" asked Chase.

"It's true," said Rita. "My father had only five pounds in his bank account. It was quite a shock."

"He must have had money hidden somewhere else," said Chase. "He told me he could produce a hundred thousand in gold."

"It wasn't like him to lie," said Rita, frowning. "But I can't understand why he didn't tell me about it. Yesterday I had to sell some of his personal effects—just to get money to live on."

"Why did Martin always stay away from home on Thursday night?" Chase inquired.

"He had done it ever since my mother died," Rita told him. "I never asked any questions."

"I'd like to have a talk with this fellow Forsythe," said Chase meditatively.

"Right after Martin was killed he went up to Vunindawa," said Crandall. "I heard the road to Vunindawa was washed out yesterday."

"Isn't there some way I can reach the place?"

"Go to Nausori and take a punt up the Rewa River," suggested Crandall. "I can find you a guide. Ratu Deve. He's a young chief."

"Might I go too?" Rita asked meekly. "I know that country almost as well as Ratu Deve. I've been up the river many times with Father."

"Suit yourself," said Chase. "Arrange it for tomorrow."

He walked with them as far as Numbukalou Bridge. The Street of All Nations seemed unnaturally noisy and crowded, and was dotted with a surplus of white-skirted constables. Chase spied Herbert Tewkes, asked him what was wrong.

"There's been a disturbance in the Toorak district," said Tewkes excitedly. "The Hindians raised bloody 'ell when they found Patel was bein' 'eld for murder!"

"But they're not holding him for murder," said Chase. "Only for illegal possession."

"They ain't 'oldin' 'im for anything now," shrilled Tewkes. "Patel broke jail fifteen minutes hago. 'E's a blasted fugitive!"

It wasn't until the next morning that Chase went around to the police station. When he entered, it seemed that everyone of importance was there. There was the governor, several native dignitaries, Samuel Ellis and Major Drake.

The major greeted Chase with a wide, horse-toothed smile.

"I'm delighted at what you've done," he effused. "Harkness tells me that the charges against you have been dropped."

"You're lucky to get back your bail money," said Chase. "I was nearly Shanghaied last night."

"I heard about that, too," nodded the major gravely. "Something is vitally wrong here in Suva, and I'm afraid Patel is at the bottom of it. He escaped from five constables, bolted out the front door and . . ."

"Congratulations on your fine detective work," interrupted Ellis. "Now, I suppose, you'll be returning to the States?"

"Not until I've investigated the Martin Sugar Refineries," Chase replied.

ELLIS clucked his tongue.

"Martin's dream of expanding the business is ruined now," he stated. "The Indians believe that the Martin organization is responsible for Patel's downfall, and they'll refuse to work. Furthermore, there's the question of capital."

"Martin must have made some profit out of the sugar mills," argued Chase.

"He did," admitted Ellis. "But as his solicitor, I can truthfully say that he never had more than a few pounds in the bank. On the other hand, he never lacked ready cash when it was needed. The whole thing is odd."

"If only the money could be found, for Rita's sake," sighed Major Drake. "To help her out I purchased her father's ivory collection and a few of his paintings. I offered to do more, but she wouldn't accept it, poor child!"

At ten o'clock, Chase stood in front of the general post office waiting for the lorry to Nausori. Rita Martin joined him a few minutes later, clad in blue slacks and wearing a wide-brimmed cotton hat.

"I want you to meet our chaperon," she said, pointing to a huge, frizzy-topped Fijian in a sport shirt and tailored blue *sulu*.

The man emerged shyly from behind a flame tree. Hanging from one shoulder was a bath towel decorated with red fish. Woven into one end of the towel was the name, Ratu Deve Vuniyayawa.

"*Bula*," said Ratu Deve, extending a powerful, chocolate-colored hand. "We go up the Rewa to Fijian village. Much good fish, dalo, yam, and maybe pig. You like Fiji?"

"I don't know yet," said Chase. "I haven't seen much of it, outside of the police station."

The lorry rolled up to the curb, and they climbed through a door in the rear, sitting on narrow wooden benches that ran lengthwise.

An old bewhiskered native carrying a wicked cane knife plumped himself next to Chase and Rita. Three ragged Indians sat on the opposite bench, and Ratu Deve got in next, followed by a dumpy Fijian with no front teeth and a supremely idiotic smile.

It was only a twelve mile ride to Nausori, but in the course of the journey Chase felt his hair rapidly turning gray.

Through the slatted openings in the side, he watched Suva whiz past in a jumble of color. At the head of Wai-manu Road they had a hairbreadth escape from the equally aggressive Kan-gee laundry wagon, and the lorry whirled down a winding, pot-holed

road flanked by steaming green gul-lies.

Now and then, the driver stopped to cram in more passengers, until Chase became slowly nauseated by the odor of rancid coconut oil and unwashed Orientals. His arm crept around Rita to keep her from being squashed against a sideboard. Her wide-brimmed hat flopped back, and she smiled up at him.

"You get used to riding in these things after awhile," she confided. "But by that time you're too old to care about traveling."

Passing fields of rice and cane, they came to a broad, sluggish river. The Rewa was spanned by a new concrete toll bridge, and on the other side lay Nausori. One main street, lined with shedlike buildings, was all Nausori could boast of. Dropping from the lorry, Chase noticed that the street was deserted.

"Something's wrong," said Rita. "The shops are closed, and not a person in sight. Where's Ratu Deve?"

Ratu Deve had vanished, but in a few minutes he was seen coming out of a tumbledown kava saloon, his face serious.

"Much trouble in Nausori," he said. "Patel was here little while ago. He made angry speech, and the Indians have all followed him to wreck Martin sugar mill."

"Isn't there some way we can stop them?" Rita asked.

RATU DEVE shook his head. "They are at mill now. The district commissioner will soon be here from Nanduruloulou, and Fiji Defense Force is on its way from Suva. It is good thing for us to get out quickly."

"Right," said Chase. "Catching Patel is a matter for the police. I came up here to see Forsythe."

Ratu Deve led them down the sloping river bank, along a path. A large rowboat, equipped with an outboard motor, was beached on the shore, a

morose Madras hunched clodlike in the stern.

The Indian whipped the motor with a leather thong, and they pattered up the broad bosom of the Rewa. Passing within sight of the Martin sugar mill, they heard a tumultuous shouting. The corrugated iron sheds were surrounded by Indians.

Cables had been fastened to an immense molasses tank, and the other ends were secured to a small railroad engine. The engine chuffed laboriously, the tank creaked and teetered.

Yells of triumph echoed across the valley as the tank toppled over, trembling the earth with a thunderous impact and splitting at both ends. Tons of molasses oozed over the black soil, spreading around the sheds, gumming the wheels of the engine.

The bell of a police car clanged from Nausori Bridge, and the Indians began to scatter.

"A score for Patel," said Chase. "He's striking back with a vengeance."

Rita Martin stared at the destruction grimly and said nothing. The boat soon chugged around a bend in the river, and the sugar mill was left behind.

CHAPTER V

South of Sere



WHILE they progressed farther upstream, the sky darkened and the river valley narrowed to a gash between the hills. The banks were deep olive, graced with

pluming sprays of bamboo. Indian women hammered their washing on rocks while naked Fijian boys swam toward them shouting gleefully.

A raft laden with bananas skimmed past, followed by the carcass of a cow. Once in a while, they sighted a native village with thatched, peak-roofed

houses, spreading lawns and spindly palm trees.

A waterfall gushed out of the stone mountainside. The country became wilder. The current more rapid.

For the first time, Jackson Chase felt that he was really seeing Fiji. Here was virgin country where natives dwelled in an unspoiled primitive state. These were the cannibal hills. The romance and glamor of the South Seas had not disappeared. It was all here—in a wooden boat puttering up a tropical river.

Rita seemed to feel it too, for she was silent and thoughtful. The clouds thickened and began to drip rain. Chase took off his coat, put it around Rita's shoulders.

"Tonight we stay with my friend, the *buli* of Serea," announced Ratu Deve. "There will be much food, plenty kava and . . ."

"Sounds fine," Chase cut in. "But when do I see Forsythe?"

"*Malua*," replied the Fijian.

"Which means 'bye and bye'," Rita interpreted. "You're in the bush now, and time doesn't exist."

Six hours later, they reached the government post at Vunindawa, waded through a stream, and took a slimy, treacherous trail that curled around the side of a hill.

On top the hill, with a vista of rivers, fields and forests, lay the village of Serea. Greeted by a crowd of awestruck natives, Chase and Rita were immediately taken to the chief's

buri, and the entire village crowded in for a night of feasting and entertainment.

Toward midnight, after downing the eighth cup of soapy kava, Chase crept out a side door, filled his pipe and gazed at a bulging moon which hung above the river country like a yellow lantern. Clouds drifted seaward like prowling animals. The rain had ceased, but the grass and trees were covered with a moist film. From the *buri* came the sound of male voices blending in rich harmony. Someone tapped him on the arm. It was Rita.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked.

"I was wondering," said Chase. "Are there any pine trees in Fiji?"

"They have a species like the New Zealand Kauri up at Nandarivatu," she said. "It's very high up there, and sometimes quite cold."

"Your father uttered two words before he died," Chase stated. "One was 'pines', and the other was 'Rama'. Do you know what they could mean?"

The girl wrinkled her nose. "Rama is a peak near Suva," she stated. "Most people call it 'Joske's Thumb'. But there isn't a pine tree within miles."

She walked across the lawn slowly, and Chase grasped her hand.

"I know about you selling those paintings to Drake," he said. "Don't worry. I'm convinced that your father had a fortune hidden somewhere on the island, and I'm going to find it!"

[Turn page]



"You've come a long way in my estimation since we first met," she said wistfully. "I'd like to forget those first few days and only remember this moment."

"It's a grand moment to remember," he agreed. "Moonlight, the smell of rain on the leaves— Say, will that kava make you drunk?"

"No. But if you drink enough it makes your legs wobbly, while your head remains clear."

"That's how I feel now," he said. "My knees are shaky, but I know what I want."

"What?"

CHASE drew the girl close, kissed her on the lips. She gave a quiet sigh, and her fingers closed tightly about his arms.

"I'm glad," she whispered. "It makes everything perfect."

The moon seemed to sway in its giddy course across the hills, a huge hoptoad looked askance from behind the grass blades, and, led by Ratu Deve, the natives in the *buri* swelled their masculine voices to an organ-like chorus. . . .

Bernard Forsythe lived by himself in a tin-roofed plantation house south of Serea. He was short, bald and unpleasant—which is about the only description anyone ever gave of him.

Having been warned, Chase was prepared for the worst when he and Rita started from the village after breakfast. Forsythe saw them coming, and he met them on the veranda, a revolver hanging in a holster at his hip.

"Morning," said Chase. "Miss Martin and I want to talk with you on a matter. . . ."

"I know what you're after," snapped Forsythe. "You've come to throw me out of my house. Well, you can't do it. I'll kill you first!"

Ordinarily Chase would have bridled, but now he used a tone of firm politeness.

"No need to be upset," he said. "We don't want your plantation."

"Get out!" Forsythe snarled, his hand on the gun butt.

"We came to ask you some questions about my father," said Rita gently.

"I don't want to talk," retorted Forsythe. "The Martin mills would ruin a man for a sixpence—and you'd do the same!"

Chase's eyes closed drowsily, but beneath the fringe of lashes were pinpoints of steel. He walked up the veranda steps and smiled as Forsythe drew his gun.

"You potbellied old pig," he said, without raising his voice. "No wonder your wife showed the good sense to run off with a sailor."

When he finished speaking Forsythe was trembling with rage, trembling so hard that he had difficulty in holding the revolver. Chase waited for the trigger finger to tighten, then lunged quickly to one side, and the bullet whined a good three feet past his head.

Hooking his arm around Forsythe's neck, Chase tore the weapon from his grasp and hurled him from the veranda. Forsythe rose cursing, his clothes stained with red earth.

"Now we'll go inside and talk matters over sensibly," said Chase.

The first thing that caught Chase's eye when they entered the room was an Indian knife with an ivory handle and a carved ivory sheath. It lay on a crude table near the door, and he inspected it carefully.

"Martin was killed with a knife exactly like this," he remarked.

Forsythe was eager to talk now.

"There were two knives like that," he blurted. "Martin gave me that one years ago. He gave the other to Scotty Crandall!"

Chase turned to Rita, "Is this true?"

"Yes," she admitted. "I knew it was Scotty's knife all along. Scotty told me that someone stole it from his room. That's why we rummaged through your things that day. We were looking for the sheath."

"Fine thing," said Chase annoyedly. "You wait until now to tell me that your father was stabbed with Crandall's knife."

"But Scotty had no reason to . . ."

"Huh!" snorted Chase. He was staring at the floor.

"You've been down the river lately, eh, Forsythe?"

"No," Forsythe returned. "I haven't been away from my house for two days."

"The soil in this district is all red," said Chase. "Yet there is fresh black mud on the floor, the kind found at the river's mouth. I wonder how it got here?"

He inspected the rear of the house and looked into the back bedroom. Standing before him, haggard and muddy, was A. P. Patel.

"You are astute, Mr. Chase," acknowledged the Indian. "I am your prisoner."

"Good," smiled Chase. "In order to make sure that you remain a prisoner, I'm taking you and friend Forsythe back to Suva. I hope there's no objection?"

PATEL'S eyes were on the revolver.

"None whatever," he said graciously.

The trip downstream to Nausori took only three hours. They found the town under martial law, and the district commissioner was only too glad to take Patel and Forsythe into custody. Chase, Rita and Ratu Deve started back to Suva in a taxi which they discovered near the Nausori Bridge.

"Hope I've done the right thing," Chase said to Rita. "When the Indians learn that Patel's in jail, Suva may see plenty of rioting and bloodshed."

"Do you think he's guilty?" Rita asked.

"Frankly, no. But he and Forsythe are both suspects, and I had to bring them back."

"If Patel weren't in jail, the Indians

wouldn't cause any trouble," said Rita. "Why couldn't he be released on bail?"

"Who'd put up that much bail for an Indian?"

"Major Drake," she suggested. "He has great confidence in you. If you tell him that Patel isn't guilty—"

"That's an idea." Chase snapped his fingers. "You find Scotty Crandall, and I'll have a talk with Drake."

"Very good steak and eggs at Hong Kong Café," said Ratu Deve hopefully. "First we stop there, sa?"

"What a man," muttered Chase. "I'll bet you could eat your weight in wildcats."

Rita and Ratu Deve climbed from the cab on Victoria Parade. Chase stopped for several minutes at the Cable Office, then headed for the hill-top home of Major Drake. The spare, lantern-jawed Englishman was clipping hibiscus blossoms from beneath the front window. He greeted Chase genially, asked him in for tea.

"I suppose you know about the riot in Nausori," said Chase. "When the police arrived, Patel escaped up the river and hid at Forsythe's plantation."

Drake looked up from his teacup in surprise.

"You've located Patel?"

"I brought him back," declared Chase. "He and Forsythe are now in a police car bound for the Suva jail."

"Topping," said the major. "They should hang him without delay."

"If they do, there'll be the most godawful Indian rebellion you ever saw," Chase warned. "I want you to bail Patel out before there's a general massacre."

"I say—"

"You trusted me once, and I'm asking you to do it again."

"But after what the man did at Nausori—"

"Patel's got a grudge against the Martin Sugar Refineries," continued Chase. "From what he told me, I'm convinced that he's been duped. The

Inter-Island company doesn't want the Martin outfit to expand, and their representatives have managed to influence Patel."

"You have proof of this?"

"Not yet," admitted Chase. "But after talking with Patel, it seems fairly evident."

"I'd like to believe you," said Drake sympathetically. "But there's no way I could reconcile myself to supporting a rascally Indian. Please understand."

"Sure." Chase watched the major stick long palm fibers into the hibiscus stems and arrange the flowers in a vase. "I notice you've put up some new pictures," he said.

"Martin's oils," nodded Drake.

Chase inspected a large canvas which appeared to crowd the others off the wall. The picture was a landscape showing a craggy peak overhung with clouds.

"Looks almost like a photograph," he observed.

"Martin had a wonderfully photographic style," said Drake. "That's a view of Rama."

Chase scrutinized the painting more closely. Green brush surrounded the thumblike spire of the mountain, and directly in line with the thumb stood several tall trees.

"Come here, Major," he said. "What kind of trees would you say these are?"

Drake took a good look. "I should say they resemble pines," he replied. "But of course they couldn't be pines."

"The pines of Rama!" said Chase vibrantly. "That's what Martin was trying to say before he died."

"It's—it's most unusual."

"Martin was an unusual guy," Chase continued. "That painting isn't a work of art, it's a work of draftsmanship. Martin knew that Oregon pines were out of place on a tropical mountain, and he put them there to indicate something, possibly the money that we've been wondering about. Mind if I take the picture down?"

"No. Of course not." Drake was mildly curious.

Chase placed the painting face down on the floor and ran his finger along the back of the frame. Taking a paper knife from the desk, he pulled out the tacks that secured the canvas.

"Strange," he said. "There's a double canvas."

He removed the back canvas and held it up to the sunlight. Painted on it with firm black strokes was a large sketch of Rama's thumb. A long perpendicular line touched the outer edge of the thumb, and a horizontal line crossed it at a small knoll just below the thumb's protuberance.

"Here's the answer," said Chase. "The gold must be buried right where those two lines cross."

"Don't jump at conclusions," said Drake. "I believe artists sometimes make lines like that in sketches to help them judge perspective. Still, the theory is worth investigation—for Rita's sake. You may take the bottom canvas with you."

"Thanks." Chase ripped off the wide borders with the paper knife and then stuffed the canvas into his pocket.

"Let me know what you find," said Drake, escorting him to the door.

"If I find anything, you'll hear my yell down here in Suva," Chase promised.

He hopped into his waiting taxi and sped toward Victoria Parade.

CHAPTER VI

Buried Treasure



HE MET Rita at six o'clock in Oska's Restaurant, a bright bowery place run by two Samoan girls.

"Scotty's disappeared," she said perturbedly. "The boarding house lady said he didn't come home last night. Then I searched his room—and found this."

She opened her purse and brought out a carved ivory knife sheath.

"It looks bad for Scotty," said Chase.

"And that isn't all," continued Rita. "When I got home, I found a note from Mr. Ellis. He's decided to sell the Martin Refineries—to merge them with Inter-Island."

"How can Ellis do that?"

"According to Father's will, Ellis has control of the refinery stock until I'm twenty-one, which isn't for six more months. Ellis said that the mills have been crippled because of the labor shortage and the riot at Nausori. He said there's no chance of the business remaining solvent without outside capital. The deal takes place tomorrow at ten o'clock."

"Ten o'clock," repeated Chase meditatively. "That gives us one slim chance."

"What?"

He showed her the map and related his discovery.

"I've a hunch your father's money is buried up there on Rama," he said. "If it's going to do any good, I'll have to find it before morning."

"You're going up on the peak of Rama tonight?"

Chase nodded. "I'm expecting an important cable," he said. "Pick it up tomorrow as soon as the cable office opens. Then go straight to Ellis' house—and don't let him out till I get there!"

He left Rita and found Ratu Deve consuming prawns at the Hong Kong Café.

"We're climbing to the top of Rama," he told the Fijian. "You know the trail?"

Ratu Deve's eyes bulged fearfully.

"Rama bad place at night," he said huskily. "Many *yalo*—evil spirits!"

It took considerable threats and persuasion to entice the native into the taxi. Stopping at a Chinese store, Chase purchased a shovel, pickax and lantern, and then instructed the driver to head out on Queens Road.

Passing the formidable concrete front of His Majesty's jail, he noticed a contingent of armed soldiers stationed on both sides of the highway.

Patel was in jail, and the government expected something to happen.

Bridging a network of streams, the road cut through a mangrove swamp and wound up the side of a forested hill.

At a command from Ratu Deve, the Indian driver brought his car to a stop. Chase pounded the earth with his pickax and found it solid.

"Drive off the road and hide your cab in that thicket," he instructed. "Wait for us, and don't let anyone see you."

"This shortest way to Rama," said Ratu Deve.

They plunged into a dense jungle carpeted with decayed wood and pink orchids. Creepers obstructed the way. Savage nettles clawed at their arms and legs. Chips of purplish sky gleamed through the canopy of leaves, then faded into darkness.

Chase lit the lantern, and its rays made the forest crawl with eerie shadows. As they climbed higher, great boulders appeared, and the trees became gnarled and bent.

Water gushed out of the porous earth in a hundred rivulets, and it was apparent that they were trampling over the rocky carcass of an ancient volcano. Time had destroyed the cone, leaving only weathered dykes of lava and a thumb-shaped core.

Not until he reached the top did Chase realize how huge the thumb of Rama was. Trees and brush grew about its base, but the thumb was a gaunt rocky pinnacle that seemed to scrape the stars. On the seaward side, a deep ravine dropped off into the darkness, and from its depths came the sibilant sound of a stream.

CHASE stood directly beneath the thumb's bulge, enveloped by steamy mist. At this spot, the ground was stony rubble, bare of vegetation,

although bounded by a semicircle of brush. Dropping the tools he inspected the square of canvas while Ratu Deve held the lantern.

"Fiji men never come to these mountains after sunset," said the native softly. "They fear the *yalo*."

Chase was too engrossed with his diagram to pay much attention. A few feet to his left was the knoll where the lines crossed.

He looked upward, trying to decide where a plumb line dropped from the outermost edge of the gigantic rock might fall. The mist made this impossible. He could only probe about the top of the knoll until the veil of clouds lifted.

Uninspired by the idea of work, Ratu Deve spent most of his time leaning on the pickax while Chase scooped up yards of rocky topsoil.

Hour after hour the shovel crunched into the earth as Chase labored furiously, sweat rolling down his stubbly face and falling in large drops from the tip of his nose.

The mist showed no promise of lifting, and he had already gouged out a sizeable trench. A dull sense of futility made his aching arms heavy. His watch told him that it was almost dawn. For the first time, he was beginning to believe that Martin's treasure was a myth.

ANGRILY, he raised the shovel and drove it into the subsoil.

The scoop sank deep and struck something hard and hollow. Chase commenced to dig frantically as he felt metal scraping metal.

In a few moments, he had uncovered a rusty iron box about two feet square. A padlock in a staple held down the cover. He chopped it off quickly with the pickax, opened the box, and the lantern light struck its contents with a warm yellow gleam. Ratu Deve sank to the ground in amazement.

"Gold!" gasped the Fijian. "Sovereigns, ingots jewelry!"

Seizing the box by both handles,

Chase lifted it from the earth triumphantly.

"Give me a hand," he grunted. "We haven't much time. . . ."

Crack!

A yellow flame spat from the fog-drenched underbrush. Chase fell to one knee as a bullet creased his cheek, nicking the ear lobe. Blood poured down his neck, but there was no instant pain, only a throbbing ache.

"*A yalo!*"

With a shriek of terror Ratu Deve ran for the crevice at the foot of the pinnacle.

Chase's first thought was to extinguish the light. Instantly he hurled the lantern as far as he could. It rattled into the ravine, and the mountainside was shrouded in pitchy blackness.

The attacker had probably been watching for some time from the brush. Chase knew that only a chance movement of his head had saved his life. By extinguishing the lantern he now had an even chance, providing he was not outnumbered.

Crawling over to his discarded coat, he reached into the side pocket and found the revolver he had taken from Forsythe. Slowly, silently, he crept toward the underbrush.

A cool breeze sweeping in from the sea made him realize that the protective mist was swiftly evaporating, and he sprang to his feet, intending to make a dash for cover. At that moment, a shaft of starlight split the fog like a beacon.

Standing directly in front of him, half-shielded by a stunted cassaurina, was a ghostly figure in a *topi*. An ugly short-barreled rifle slanted over the tangled leaves.

Chase dived into the brushwood just as the gun crackled. It was a wild, powerful lunge, and it brought him within arm's length of his enemy's legs.

Dropping his pistol, he grabbed the man's thighs and with a rolling movement toppled the rifleman to the

ground. The man fell with a thud and tried to swing the barrel of his gun toward Chase's head.

Chase was on top of him in an instant, fists smashing. Buried in nettles, he pinned the man's shoulders to the ground with his knees and hammered savagely at the pale indistinguishable blob that was a face.

WITH a show of prodigious strength the man raised his shoulders, forcing Chase backward. Two, big-knuckled hands fastened about Chase's throat, tightening like the cord of a garotte.

Chase gasped, succeeded in throwing a jolting blow to his enemy's ear. The strangler's head jerked to one side, but he continued to rise, his muscular fingers digging into Chase's jugular.

Struggling hard for breath, Chase felt that his spine would snap. The figure before him seemed to expand, growing taller and taller like a great white djinn. Suddenly the grappling fingers relaxed, and a rawboned knee-cap struck Chase's chin.

Flopping to one elbow, Chase saw a face leering down at him in the starlight. A dark glistening stream flowed from wide nostrils, and square teeth gleamed through the blood in a terrible smile of triumph.

It was as if a frozen statue had suddenly taken on the guise of a demon, for Chase had seen that face only in serenity. Now, livid with emotion, it resembled a gaunt gargoyle — the blunt chin and slab-sided jaws were unmistakably those of Major Drake.

A black automatic snapped out of Drake's hip holster.

"So you were right about the pines of Rama after all," said the Englishman harshly. "A clever deduction."

"I wondered why you gave up that diagram so willingly," scowled Chase.

"I never gave it up," said Drake. "I've been following you since you left my house. I left my car by the roadside only a few hundred yards

from your taxi and came up here by another trail."

"And now what?"

"In a game such as this, the loser can expect no mercy," said Drake. "When they find the bodies of you and your frightened Fijian companion, the police will undoubtedly believe that you had a fatal argument. I shall arrange it that way."

"You're good at arranging things," said Chase.

He moved his hand through the undergrowth and experienced a thrill as his fingers touched the cold butt of his discarded pistol. Drake evidently believed that he had come unarmed.

The automatic angled down at Chase's forehead. He saw the major's trigger finger contract, and without raising his arm, he fired the revolver from the ground.

The slug shattered Drake's left shoulder-blade, spinning him off balance. Drake fell sideward, caught himself and ran onto the clearing with Chase close at his heels. Making for the trail, he stumbled over the iron box and went down in a heap.

Suddenly taking heart, Ratu Deve rushed from his hiding place, snatched up the pickax and swung it at Major Drake's head. With a froglike leap Drake jumped out of the way, landing at the ravine's edge as the pickax struck the ground.

Drake swung around savagely, and pointed his gun at the Fijian. But before he could fire, Chase reached his side and hurled a crashing left at the Englishman's blunt jaw.

As Drake plummeted into the ravine, his wild gunshot made the crags rattle. Twigs snapped under the weight of his whirling body—then nothing was audible but the whispering stream.

"*Vinaka*," said Ratu Deve, gazing into the blackness of the ravine. "He is gone."

A faint light of dawn was appearing in the east.

"No time to lose now," said Chase

anxiously. "There's a long trail ahead of us, and we have to get this gold to Suva before ten o'clock."

The sun was glaring down torridly when they plumped the gold into the cab and backtracked to town. Just beyond the cemetery the road was blocked by a mob of Indians.

The driver slammed on the brakes barely in time to keep from strewing turbaned figures all over the swamp-land. Clenched fists were waved in Chase's face as he stepped from the taxi. A buxom Indian woman spat at him, and he pressed through the crowd with children yammering at his coat tail.

They were all assembled in front of the jail, and on the castlelike parapet stood a row of stiffly erect soldiers. A two-wheeled cart bearing a stripped tree trunk rumbled down the road, pushed along by the crowd.

The cart swung around, and the log was pointed at the jail's great double doors. A Defense Force officer in trim khaki appeared on the parapets.

"If you attempt to force the door, I shall give the command to fire!" he threatened.

"Patel . . . Patel . . . Patel!"

The cry went up in shrill defiance. The battering ram moved forward.

Cracking out with both fists, Chase burrowed into the crowd and pulled himself onto the cart. "Wait!" he shouted. "There is something that you must all know! Give me an interpreter!"

A bowlegged Hindu in a diaperish loincloth clambered up beside him.

"Salaam, Sahib," he nodded. "What is it you wish to tell them?"

"Tell them that I have just learned their leader is innocent," Chase replied. "Tell them that Patel will be released before sunset. Tell them to go home!"

The Hindu silenced the crowd with a gesture. As he spoke, they listened respectfully, but added grumblings of distrust.

For several tense moments, the mob

was swept by indecision, and a single defiant shout would have rekindled the spark of rebellion. Dropping from the cart, Chase returned to the taxi, picked a fistful of gold sovereigns from the iron box and hurled them into the swamp.

With one surge the mob broke for the mangroves, sliding in the thick black mud, tumbling over each other in an effort to find the precious coins. The taxicab growled into low, whirling around the bend.

"Quickly," Chase told the driver. "To the house of *Sahib* Ellis."

CHAPTER VII

Proposal—For Merger



SAMUEL ELLIS resided in a neat little house on the hillside above Walu Bay. Rita was waiting in the parlor when Chase arrived, and an Indian boy stood by the hall

door. The girl stared at Chase's gashed cheek.

"You poor darling," she gasped. "What on earth . . ."

"Tell you about it later," said Chase briskly. "Did you get my cable-gram?"

Rita handed him a brown envelope, and it took him several minutes to peruse its contents. When he looked up, Ellis was standing in the hall entrance, his brow wrinkled concernedly.

"Good morning, Chase," said the lawyer. "I say, what happened to you?"

"Nothing serious," returned Chase. "But I'm afraid you can't merge the Martin Refineries with Inter-Island now. I've located Martin's cash, and I'm sending a recommendation to my firm to advance a hundred thousand more for expansion of the business."

"This is—is quite a pleasant surprise," faltered Ellis.

"I doubt it," said Chase. "I have a long cablegram from my company's investigators in New Zealand. According to them, most of the Inter-Island stock is owned by the Fiji Holding Company, and the owners of that firm are listed as Charles Drake and Samuel Ellis!"

"You're mistaken," said Ellis.

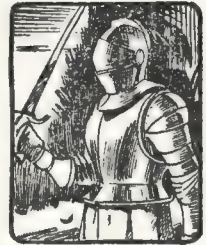
"Not this time," insisted Chase. "Everything you've done has been subversive to the Martin interests. You and Drake were trying to control

seemed certain to materialize, you were desperate. You and Drake decided to get Martin out of the way by the only means left—murder.

"Crime was no novelty to both of you, for, according to this cablegram, Drake had a shady background in India, and you served a prison term in Singapore. One of you stole Scotty's knife, sneaked up the back stairs of the hotel and stabbed Martin in his sleep.

"When Drake heard that I'd been

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the entire sugar output of Fiji, but Martin's firm was growing and threatened eventually to put Inter-Island out of business.

"Upon learning that Martin intended to expand his refineries by enlisting outside capital, you tried to cause labor trouble among the Indians. You did this by secretly telling Patel a lot of lies about Martin's desire to crush his people.

"Martin, of course, never suspected that his own lawyer and trusted friend were the owners of Inter-Island.

"When Martin's plan to expand

held for the crime, he thought he'd pull a master stroke and bail me out, thinking that I'd be eager to pin the guilt on some likely suspect such as Patel or Scotty.

"His scheme went wrong when Hassan, the houseboy, sent me that message. Hassan had been on duty the night of the killing and had probably seen the murderer making his exit by the back stairway.

"The message was intercepted by Herbert Tewkes, who had been hired by you to keep watch on me. Unfortunately for you, Tewkes only copied

the letter, giving me the original. That put you and Drake in a bad spot.

"To prevent me from meeting Hassan, Captain Briggs was hired to kidnap me when I left the hotel. We missed connections because I decided to walk and started early. But Briggs' men were waiting for me when I got back."

"But—but who killed Hassan?" said Rita bewilderedly.

"Drake was the only one who knew how to shoot a long range rifle," said Chase. "He broke into Patel's office the night before and wrote a note on the typewriter to make sure that Patel wouldn't be around at the time I was to meet Hassan.

"He left the rifle in a chest so that Patel would be suspected of murdering Hassan, Martin—and possibly me. By hanging Patel, Drake would cause an Indian uprising. The government would then abandon its protective policy, and he could pay the sugar workers starvation wages. He was taking long chances, but he was playing with high stakes."

"Was Forsythe involved in this?" Rita inquired.

CHASE shook his head. "He was sore at the Martin Refineries because Ellis threatened to foreclose his mortgage, without your father's consent. Forsythe befriended Patel because they both hated the same thing."

"This is all conjecture," sneered Ellis.

"Scotty Crandall might be able to substantiate a few facts," retorted Chase. "Where is he?"

"How should I know?" the lawyer sneered.

Chase pulled his revolver, turned on the Indian houseboy.

"Where is *Sahib* Crandall?" he said scowlingly.

"Him—him in back room," stammered the houseboy. "Tied up."

"Fetch him," Chase ordered.

"You—you can't pin this on me," said Ellis brokenly. "I didn't kill Mar-

tin. It was Drake! Drake's the boulder who . . ."

"Drop that gun, Chase!"

Framed in the front doorway was a tattered, blood-smeared figure holding a black automatic.

"Appears that I arrived barely in time," said Drake gutturally. "The ravine was deep enough, Chase, but the brush on the side broke my fall nicely. And you, Ellis—go on with your interesting description of me!"

Ellis gulped hard. Chase let his revolver fall by the hall door.

"I presume the gold is in your taxicab," said Drake. "It may interest you to know that I have a thirty-foot ketch anchored in the lagoon. A man who takes chances with the law must provide for everything."

"Take me with you!" said Ellis in a whining voice. "I didn't mean what I said."

Drake's bloodcaked lips parted in a faint smile, and the automatic answered with a flashing roar. The glass in Ellis' spectacles tinkled to the floor, and his eye became a flowing hole.

Rita gave a shriek of terror as the body pitched down in front of her. Drake's gun swiveled toward Jackson Chase.

Flame crackled—but from the opposite doorway. Drake clutched at his stomach and twisted to his knees. A gasping rattle strained his throat, his fingers twitched in the spasms of death.

Scotty Crandall stood in the hallway chunkily, holding Chase's revolver.

"Lucky you threw that gun so near the door," Crandall commented. "I was able to reach out and grab it without the blighter seein' me. I heard Drake's voice right after the Indian cut me loose and figured something was wrong."

"How long have you been here?" asked Chase, breathing hard with relaxed tension.

"A couple of days," said Crandall. "After you went up the river, I tried

to rifle Ellis' papers, and he caught me. I found the ivory knife sheath hidden in his desk."

"But Rita found it in your room."

"He stole it from me and put it back there yesterday," Crandall answered. "Drake was for feeding me to the sharks at once, but Ellis said it was too risky."

After telling Crandall to telephone the police, Chase led Rita out on the small veranda facing the bay. Drake's midget automobile stood on a side road below the house—mute evidence of how he had managed to reach the place unnoticed by the men in the taxi. A few natives could be seen out on the brown sweep of reef. The lagoon was the color of polished jade,

and a threatening cloud-bank hung behind the upraised thumb of Rama.

"Your father must have been adding to that collection of gold for years," remarked Chase. "A great many of his Thursday nights out were probably spent hiking up to Rama. He was a great guy."

"It will be lonely without him," she said thoughtfully.

"Are you lonely now?"

"Why—no."

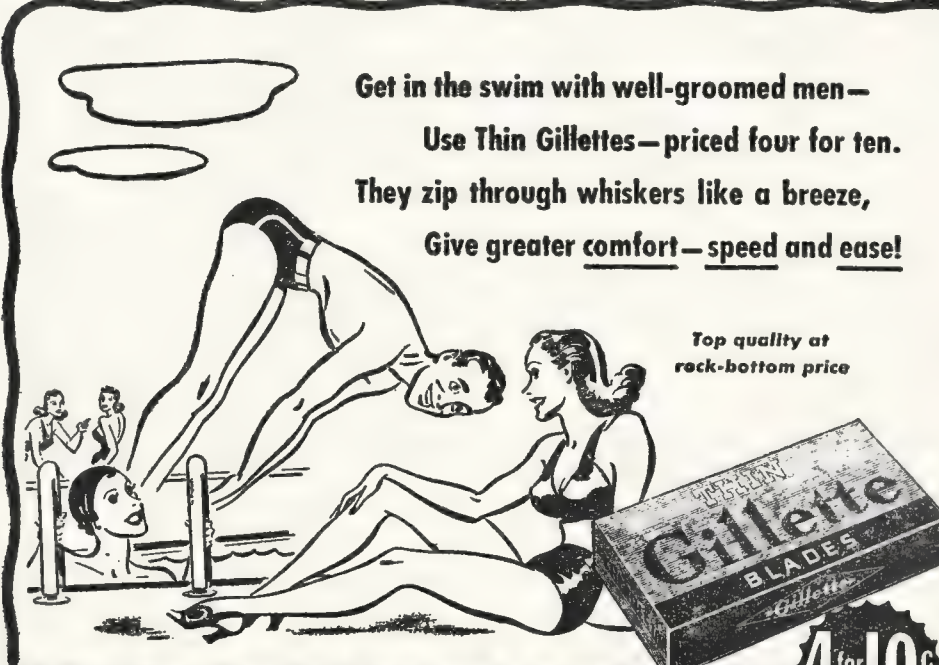
"Well, just say the word and you won't ever be," he told her. "Not even on Thursday nights."

"That's the nicest proposal I ever had," she said, pressing his hand gently. "And the only one I ever accepted."

*Next Month: SIEGE OF SWORDS, a Complete Novel
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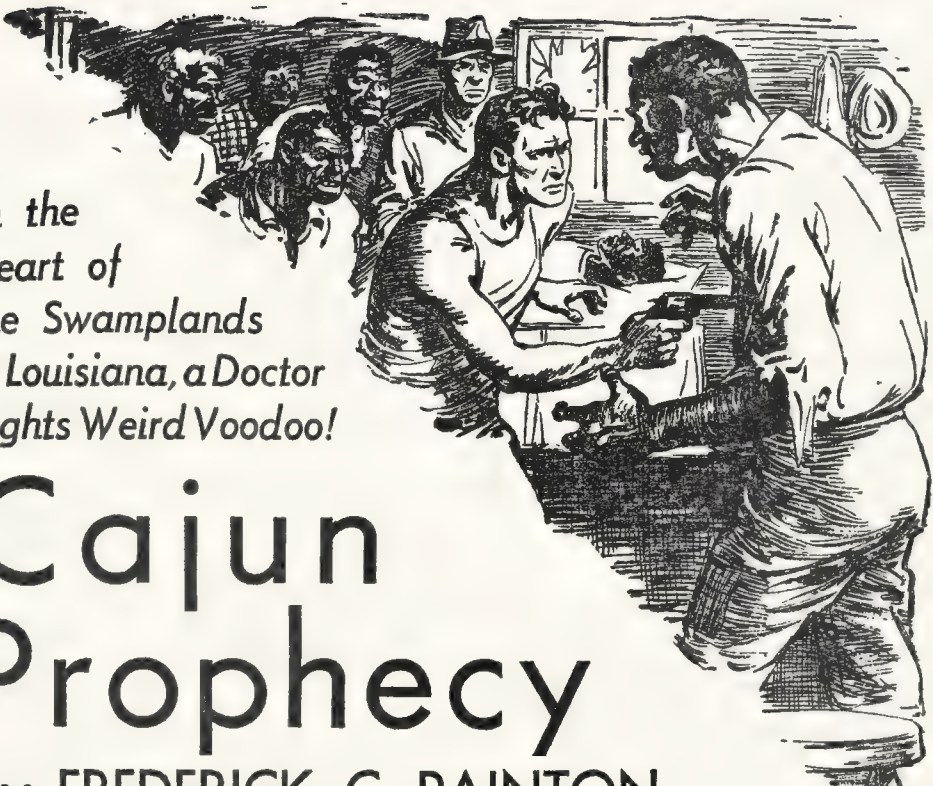
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In the
Heart of
the Swamplands
of Louisiana, a Doctor
Fights Weird Voodoo!

Cajun Prophecy

By FREDERICK C. PAINTON

Author of "Loot of Istanbul," "Too Tough to Take," etc.



Lamar jammed the
muzzle against the
giant's stomach

NOW, they tell this story about young Dr. Hugh Lamar, and it's the damndest yarn you ever read. It has to do with Lamar and the prophecy a *remede-maker* made when Hugh was an infant in a crib.

You've got to know a *remede-maker* is a Negro healer, witch doctor, voodoo man—whatever you want to call him—whom you can find only in Louisiana. The South Louisiana Negro, like his brother in Haiti, has kept his African superstitions and magic. So that the *remede-maker* can not only heal, but he can prophecy. Don't laugh yet.

When Hugh's father, Dr. David Lamar, first came to Barataria where the Mississippi mingles with the Gulf of Mexico, he grinned at *remede-makers*. Then one afternoon he went to a baseball game between some Cajuns. A batter struck the ball and

in his excitement hurled the bat. It struck a young Negro boy across the forehead.

A four-inch gash resulted; the blood spurted. Big Doc Lamar rushed to administer first aid. But a *remede-maker* was before him. The healer spat on his thumbs, pressed them against the spurting gash, mumbled something in his throat.

The blood ceased to flow!

Doc Lamar swore it ceased before his very eyes. He frowned and said, "Well, Gaston, you spat on your fingers and pressed them into the wound. And now the wound will be infected."

"Non, non, Gros Docteur," said the *remede-maker*, giving him a quick glance. "There will be no infection."

Nor was there any. Doc Lamar took six stitches in the lad's forehead, and the child was out playing the next day and all the days thereafter. Doc

didn't laugh at *remede*-making any more. It might, he said, be hypnotic suggestion, a conditioned reflex, and probably was, but in any case *remede*-makers performed queer deeds and their prophecies were uncanny.

So! On the day the colored nurse rocked young Hugh in his cradle, the *remede*-maker came into the kitchen for a bite to eat and the nurse showed him the young boy, so pink and chubby, with his bright golden hair and his big blue eyes and the sturdy body. The *remede*-maker went into one of his queer trances, scowled and looked troubled.

"This one will make powerful medicine when he grows up," he muttered. "He will bring death to Theogene Godchaux, the most powerful of the *remede*-makers, and he shall lay the ghost of Jean Lafitte."

Theogene Godchaux heard the rumor of this prophecy.

"It is made to blacken me," he thundered, "and I say to you I shall die in a huge bed with four angels looking down and heavenly music to soothe my last moment."

WELL, you hear things like that and you scoff. "The Negro is crazy. Remember, big boy, this is the United States you're talking about."

All right, wait! Skip twenty-four years and look in on young Doc Lamar, now succeeded to his father's practice in Barataria. They call him "*Ti Docteur*," the little doctor, although his father has been dead now for four years. By Ford car, by pirogue, by flatbottomed skiff and outboard motor, young Doc makes the circuit of his patients.

He is a lean, wiry young giant, an enthusiastic death-fighter who would let nothing interfere with him in his battle to save life. He scoffs at *remede*-makers.

"Superstitious rot!" he would mutter, and when told about the prophecy of his conflict with Theogene Godchaux on Barataria Island, he would

grin and say, "Forget that nonsense."

One night, then, a man named "Sunny" Wykoff came to him with a queer tale about his friend Karl Posser. This Wykoff was a big name on the radio and he told how Karl Posser had gone to Barataria Island to look for Jean Lafitte's buried pirate treasure.

Young Doc Lamar interrupted impatiently.

"But my dear fellow, there is no buried treasure. Jean Lafitte, Dominick, Blackbird—all of them died in poverty, in want. If there had been any gold buried they'd have dug it up to feed themselves.

Wykoff didn't try to argue the point. He merely said that Posser was a man of fair income, unmarried, with no relatives. Since his childhood he had studied about pirates. He was one of the greatest authorities in the United States on American pirates.

"I had him on my Sunday night program," explained Wykoff. "I'm master of ceremonies of the Consolidated Hour."

He went on to say that Posser had become convinced through study of documents, and testimony given by Pierre Lafitte when he was imprisoned in the Cabildo in New Orleans, that treasure was buried on Barataria Island. He intended to go find it. He and Wykoff had become great friends and he had urged Wykoff to come with him. It would be a pleasure jaunt as well as a hunt for buried gold.

Wykoff could not go just then but promised, later, as soon as his series of broadcasts were over, to join Posser. Posser was to write and tell where Wykoff was to join him.

"I've never heard a word from him from that day to this," concluded Wykoff quietly, "and that's more than a month ago."

Young Doc Lamar considered the point. Barataria Island was a remote, humid spot, inhabited mostly by Negroes, Portuguese, and drifted de-

scendants of the Acadien emigrés, Cajun trappers, now, mostly. Occasionally the Doc had had to go there on a call, but rarely, for they were hardy, tough men who, when they got ill, recovered or died without a physician.

There was also, on this island, the great *remede*-maker, Theogene Godchaux. Young Hugh Lamar thought of this and grinned. Wykoff broke in on his thoughts.

"I think Karl is in trouble."

"Well," the young doc said, "the best way to find out is to go and see for ourselves."

WYKOFF was a simpleton in this kind of thing. Turning a jack-light on him, the first thing Doc Lamar saw was a big, blue, .45 six-gun strapped to Wykoff's hip. Wykoff encountered Lamar's blazing blue eyes and shuffled.

"I've heard those people are dangerous," he mumbled.

"If they wanted to make trouble," interrupted Hugh Lamar patiently, "no gun could stop them. And if they don't want to make trouble, no gun is necessary. Take it off."

When Lamar was piling equipment in the flat-bottomed skiff, he came on a square, varnished box. He looked up at Wykoff. The latter flushed, then grinned.

"It's a radio," he said. "One of these new so-called mystery radios—just a self-contained outfit with two powerful batteries in it." He hesitated, then continued, "I brought it along to listen in. My program will be on without me tomorrow."

He picked up the radio and pressed a little switch. Instantly a voice came out into the damp and star glitter on the water. "And now, folks," it said, "here is Donny Bush and his orchestra playing, 'Thanks for the Memory' for your special benefit. Give, boys."

Keep your mind on that radio; it's important.

Out of the waters around Barataria Island are shipped thousands of pounds of shrimp, crabs, oysters fish. Out of the Mississippi silt-lands come thousands of fur pelts. It is a rich country, and the Cajuns and the Negroes live easy, require no learning, and have held to the old ways.

They knew young Doc Lamar, they knew of the prophecy, so now they shifted uneasily in his presence and professed ignorance of Karl Posser. Yet young Hugh discovered that a trunk-cabin cruiser had put in on Southwest Bay. Finally, Edouard Labord, who liked young Hugh, blurted out:

"Theogene Godchaux has sent word you are not to come. He will kill you if you go for this white man. go home, *Ti Docteur*."

Hugh Lamar grinned mirthlessly and the next morning he and Wykoff set off for Southwest Bay and Theogene Godchaux's home.

Lamar found the *remede*-maker under a live oak—the only one on the island—and the biggest live oak that even the doctor had ever seen. Fifteen feet through the base, it spread up and outward until its shadow covered what the natives call an *arpent* of ground. An *arpent* is a Cajun measurement of slightly less than an acre. Streamers of gray Spanish moss hung nearly to the ground so that you had to look twice to see that shack of hand-hewn logs where Theogene Godchaux made his home.

Godchaux stood there, arms folded, staring at them. He was an enormous Negro, nearly seven feet tall, and blue-black as against the ordinary chocolate-colored Negro, and he was possessed of great, deep blazing eyes that seemed afire from within. He came toward them like some stalking giant out of a child's fairy story book.

It was said that Theogene Godchaux had a visitation from God to tell him he would live to be five hun-

dred years old. There were those who said he had saved Jean Lafitte's life and every one knew that Jean Lafitte was dead and in his grave these hundred years. It was said that Godchaux went to converse with Jean Lafitte's ghost at Southwest Bay.

Lamar saw the hate blaze in the Negro's eyes, and his own breath came a little faster. Perhaps, for the first time, he considered the old prophecy as more than a folk tale. But his voice remained steady and mild.

"They say, Godchaux, you know where a man named Karl Posser now is. Take me to him."

The Negro's thick blue lips curled. "You are probably afraid to go."

"Why?" asked Hugh.

"The fever white men call 'yellow jack' has come. All white men are afraid of that."

YOUNG Lamar stared incredulously. Yellow fever! "Yellow jack!" Why, that had vanished from the land back in 1905. With the destruction of the *stegomyia* mosquito there was no more yellow fever.

"You lie, Godchaux," he said. "You lie to keep me from going to Posser."

The Negro's red mouth parted in a hideous laugh.

"I have created the yellow fever among my people. I can cure them. You will let them die. Your medicine is no good."

It seemed to young Hugh Lamar as if the big Negro was trying to anger him into going. This was not necessary; if there was yellow fever here, nothing could hold Dr. Lamar back. Horrible memories of yellow fever epidemics lay in his brain like a racial scar. This must be stamped out before it spread like a fire. Yet he could not even now believe there was yellow jack.

"How does it come you have not got the fever if you are caring for your people?"

Godchaux struck his chest a re-

sounding blow. His mouth opened, and his eyes blazed hotter yet.

"I am Godchaux, anointed of God!" he shouted. "The prophecy of me is that I shall die in bed, and four angels shall look down upon me, and the Heavenly chorus will sing, and that which they prophesied for you is a lie, a lie, a lie!" He screeched the last.

Wykoff shivered. "A nasty brute. What did he say?"

Lamar told him. "I'm going to have a look at that yellow fever case," he concluded. "And then we'll go on to Posser."

"If Karl is in the hands of this devil, God pity him," said Wykoff.

Lamar gestured curtly to Godchaux. "Lead the way."

The Negro smiled, and turned. "Wykoff," Lamar said, "it just might be yellow jack, so you stay."

"And leave you with that giant? Oh, no! Besides, I brought this, and I'd feel safer with than without you." He produced the big blue six-gun.

Young Doc Lamar laughed softly. "Stout fellow, Sunny!"

Then they started for Southwest Bay. It was miserable going, detouring around bayous protected by terrible saw grass, swamps, palmetto. Just walking exhausted a man. Hugh Lamar stood it well but toward the last, Sunny Wykoff needed a helping arm and his legs trembled and knotted with exhaustion. Yet he remained cheerful and, as Lamar forced a rest, asked about the legend of Lafitte's ghost. Lamar shrugged.

"Lafitte's hideout was around here. His treasure is supposed to be buried and he comes back to watch over it and bring death to searchers. A lot of nonsense."

Presently they walked on.

Just before sundown, the thick bush and tall grass suddenly gave way to a tiny clearing in which was a miserable hut of unpainted wood and thick plaster chinking. Outside stood a Negro. In the whitened rope

he used for a belt gleamed a foot or so of steel—a dirk evidently made out of an old bayonet honed to razor sharpness. He bowed low at sight of Godchaux.

The *remede*-maker acknowledged by haughtily inclining his head. He spoke.

"This white man who claims to be a *remede*-maker has demanded to come here to treat your son. To show you that I am greater than he, I permit it. He is Hugh Lamar, *le ti docteur* of Barataria."

The Negro's gloomy face lifted with sudden hope.

"I knew once the *gros docteur*, this one's *pere*, and when the black vomit came that one did much for us. His *remede* may be good."

"His *remede* is no good," sneered Godchaux.

"**S**TAY clear of the house," Lamar said to Wykoff. "Don't drink any water. Keep your hands in your pockets and your collar turned up and put your handkerchief around your neck. Tie your trouser bottoms tight to protect your ankles. And above all, don't draw that gun. These people here are primitive—and we'd be outnumbered."

With that, he shouldered Godchaux aside and went into the hut. He had only his small emergency kit. There was the smell of fever in the air; a dampness hung down like steam. Three Negroes stood to one side, dirks in their belts, their thick lips moving as they whispered in French patois.

Lamar moved to the bed, feeling rather than seeing Theogene Godchaux following. He stared down into the hot, drawn face of a Negro youth of twenty or so. There was white blood in this boy and he had been coffee-colored once, but he was as yellow as candlelight now.

Hugh Lamar took a close look and muttered grimly in his throat. This was yellow jack! The blood-red nos-

trils, the bright crimson lips and tongue, the ferrety and suffused eyes, told the tale. He took the pulse—one hundred and thirty-one and stringy. The temperature made him whistle. One hundred and six and four-tenths! A white man would have been dead long ago. But somehow this Negro hung on. While Lamar was doing this, the Negro vomited with the effortless ease of an infant.

There was just a tinge of black in it—blood from internal hemorrhage. Swiftly, then, Lamar went to work with ergot and perchloride of iron. He called sharply and out of the twilight of the far end of the hut a fat Negress glided, and he put her to work with cooling sponges.

A white man he would have consigned to death. But under these swift treatments the Negro boy reacted favorably. Lamar got up, wiping sweat from his face.

"The boy will live," he said. "But until two moons are passed, none of you must go away from here, nor ship your furs."

He paused now to ask when the boy had first complained of illness. To his surprise, Gaston Lefevre, the father, said yesterday afternoon. In epidemics, a twenty-four hour incubation period in yellow jack was unheard of; but in an isolated case, it was extraordinary.

"Theogene Godchaux came the day before and said there was death in the air," Gaston said, "And now my Pierre is down."

Lamar's tired head snapped erect. Godchaux here! He went swiftly to the bed, looked at the boy's wrists. There was a small blotch on the right one. The white doctor rose, positive in his own mind that Godchaux had deliberately infected this boy. But why?

He turned to the *remede*-maker.

"You infected that boy with the right kind of mosquito," he accused, "and—"

"God brings illness!" shouted God-

chaux. "No one else. I could cure this boy, give him blooming health. But you will kill him. So it is written."

Lamar smiled grimly. Knowledge of medicine counted now and he knew the boy was past the crisis and would live. "Listen not to this mouther of *blague*," he said to Gaston. "Your son will live."

"The boy will die in three hours!" screamed Godchaux.

Lamar stripped to his undershirt then and went to work. He used alkalis to kill acidity; sopping cloths of coolness; styptics to stop bleeding. He fought for hours. The fever dropped, the pulse slowed below normal. Here was the lull. And it looked good.

He rose, and went outside to light a cigarette. The white eyeballs of the boy's relatives in the gloom swiveled to follow him. Wykoff came swiftly to him.

"How does it go?"

"He's recovering. Godchaux deliberately infected him, but I can't figure out why."

He inhaled deeply on his cigarette and then suddenly Gaston Lefevre, the father, burst sobbing from the hut.

"He dies!" he screamed. "The black devil has come for him."

Lamar cursed, flung away his cigarette and raced into the hut. As he strode across the earthen floor, Theogene Godchaux drew back from the pallet. His face was venomously alight with savage joy.

The dying Negro's eyes were fixed trancelike on Theogene Godchaux's face.

"Yes, I will," he whispered distinctly. "I will."

A half hour later, the Negro boy was dead.

Slowly, Hugh Lamar walked outside.

"Godchaux told that boy to give up and die and the boy did just that!" he muttered to Wykoff.

"But why?" demanded Wykoff.

Before Lamar could reply, the Negroes poured from the house, led by Theogene Godchaux, triumphant and menacing.

"The spirits have spoken between me and this man who has come here to kill your boy!" he thundered. "Now, you see who makes the *remede*."

HUGH LAMAR straightened. He saw the dark glances, the hands hovering near the dirk. He heard the muttered expression of one he knew as Uncle Emile. The Negroes surrounded him and Wykoff. They drew the razor-sharp dirks. Wykoff sobbed in his throat and his right hand streaked for the gun. But Hugh's grasp stopped it.

"Wait!" he said. "That wouldn't do a bit of good."

He turned slowly, calmly, to face Theogene Godchaux.

"You murdered that boy," he said slowly. "You heard I was coming. You were afraid of me and the prophecy. So you made your plan to kill me. By killing this boy first so his people would take revenge on me."

Godchaux's red eyes illy veiled his triumph.

"You killed the boy I could have saved," he said. "The rule is a life for a life."

The ring of taut, scowling faces closed in. If these poor devils butchered him, Lamar thought, the authorities would put it down to superstitious fear and Godchaux would go free. A growling throat sound went up from Gaston Lefevre.

Wykoff sobbed and tore his hand loose. "He's going to—" he half-screamed.

"Stop!" yelled Lamar angrily. "All of you!"

Such was his force of will that they froze as they were. Into Lamar's mind had come the fragments of a story his father had told him of a

similar situation back in 1904. It might save them now.

"The *remede-maker* murdered your boy," Lamar said slowly. "He poisoned him and then willed him to die. But I know you will not believe that. Godchaux says I killed the boy. Well, there is a way to prove that true or false."

Godchaux's grin of triumph faded suddenly and he scowled. All eyes held to Lamar. He pointed to the boy's father.

"Go get the rooster and read the omens," Lamar said quietly. "On that reading I stand."

Godchaux's face twisted in fury. "It is not necessary to read the omens," he growled. "I, Godchaux, have said this white devil killed the boy."

Lamar pinned his gaze to the boy's father, Gaston.

"Thou knewest my father, and you know the omens read true. Come, I will go with thee and select the fowl."

Godchaux would have interfered by force, but Gaston's brothers closed in.

"If the white *traiture* will take the omens, then let them be read," he muttered.

LAMAR, knowing these Negroes, had depended upon this reaction. He had depended upon Gaston permitting him to go and select the fowl. These were a few scrawny white leghorns and Plymouth Rocks, scratching in the enclosure high enough to keep out wild animals.

"I will choose," said Lamar.

He chased and seized a young rooster and, with a quick secretive movement, forced ergot down the gullet.

"This one will read true," he said.

Gaston nodded, muttered "*très bien*," and took the fowl by the feet. He carried it squawking to the hut. The Negroes closed around

Lamar and Wykoff and forced them inside. Hugh Lamar patted Wykoff's arm.

"Don't fret. Godchaux was careful that the Negro boy was the only one to get yellow jack."

Wykoff looked at the naked dirks. "Yellow jack isn't worrying me now," he muttered with a wry smile.

Lamar stood back, idly, apparently carelessly watching the age-old ritual that had come to Africa from Caesar, and from Africa to America by the witch doctor.

With his dirk, Gaston slit the rooster from neck to crupper. With his fingers, he tore it asunder so that it lay in two flapping, quivering halves. With hot blood steaming out of it and still flopping, he lay the fowl on the silent breast of the dead boy.

Lamar felt the stark, eager silence. Men breathed loudly down each other's necks as they craned to see. Godchaux took a step forward, his huge blue feet grating harshly on the earthen floor. Hugh Lamar knew that his life hung on the ergot preventing too much bleeding, for according to the "omen," if the chicken did not bleed on the dead body, then Lamar was innocent. A minute passed. Two! The eyes around him grew ugly. The hands drew the dirks with slithering sounds.

Then, suddenly, Gaston Lefevre straightened and turned.

"It is the will of God," he said. "So the omens read. The *ti docteur* did not kill my boy and he may go in peace."

Theogene Godchaux uttered a strangled cry of disappointed fury. He leaped forward, and there was death in his eyes.

"He made the omens to lie," he screamed, "and he has made a fool of me, Theogene Godchaux."

"Now, give me the gun," Hugh Lamar said to Wykoff.

Wykoff did so. Lamar jammed the

muzzle against the giant's stomach.

"Now," he said in the patois, "you have tried to have me killed by your people. That failed. You will lead me to Karl Posser or I shall empty this gun into your stomach and see if you can digest lead."

Two of the Negroes would have interfered but Gaston Lefevre stopped them.

"The *ti docteur* is one of us, and it is his quarrel with the *remede-maker*, not ours. Let them settle it themselves as it is written."

Godchaux read the inflexible will of Hugh Lamar in his eyes. In his own cunning brain came another plan. He relaxed.

"I shall take you to the fat white man," he muttered. "Come."

They came, then, out into the sunlight, and Godchaux led the way through the grass with Lamar holding the gun in his back. Thus they crossed the salt marshes. Once, they passed a carn of stones, half-hidden now by time and vegetation. And then, presently, they came to something that was almost a hill, for it rose twenty or thirty feet above the surrounding flatness.

"Lafitte Hill," said Godchaux. "It is here your white friend is. Go in and see for yourself."

He pointed. In the hillside was a cave entrance, once made of limestone that was cut by a saw, but now hardened to steel strength. A rotting wooden door frame was beneath the rotting black beak of a ship's figure-head.

Lamar smiled. "You first, *remede-maker*," he said. "We follow."

Godchaux bent nearly in two to pass through the entrance.

"Within," he said, "you will see the ghost of Jean Lafitte, and of you I will be finished for all time."

"No tricks," said Hugh Lamar grimly, "or ghost or no ghost, I'll let you have it."

Yet within, as he reached for his

jacklight, he was overcome with astonishment. Here was something he would have said was impossible to South Louisiana—a hand-made cavern lined with limestone. And as the jacklight rays beat around the oven-shaped place, they touched on the carved edges of old, rotting chests; sailors' chests.

Then, out of the blackness beyond the reach of the jacklight, came a storm of fluttering wings. Small black things beat into Hugh Lamar's face. He raised his arms to protect his eyes against sharp beaks.

"Bats!" shouted Wykoff. "My God, get—"

He screamed and fell under a blow and the jacklight crashed to the floor but did not go black. Lamar wheeled, but he was too late. Godchaux knocked aside the gun and wrapped his terrible gorilla arms around the white doctor in a crushing embrace. And though Hugh Lamar was over six feet, strong and sinewy, even his finely tuned strength was as that of a baby in the clutch of the seven-foot Negro.

THEOGENE GODCHAUX was laughing in ferocious joy.

"You wished to see the fat blond man!" he yelled. "Well, you shall. Immediately."

Hugh Lamar did not reply. With the grip crushing his ribs, driving out the air, he had no strength. He smashed his fist at the Negro's face until he felt them smeared with hot blood. He kicked and drove his knee upward as if he would tear the *remede-maker* in two or gut him.

But it was to no avail. The clutch became tighter. Slowly, but surely, he was being bent backward so that his body was making an arc to bring the back of his skull against the back of his heels. But long before that moment came, his strong back would snap and Godchaux would twist him in two.

"Wykoff!" he gasped once.

Godchaux laughed. "Your friend joins you. There is gold here, *white traiture*, but it is gold brought by the white fools who come to find that of Jean Lafitte. Every year or so comes him with maps and legend to find Jean Lafitte's gold. And him I bring here and he leaves his gold and his life. And it is not for you to spoil such for me and mine."

As he spoke his pressure against Hugh Lamar insensibly relaxed. Hugh Lamar did not take immediate advantage of the opening. There was one chance for his life, only one. He relaxed, gathering his strength for the final effort. In hog latin, such as kids use at school, he called to Wykoff:

"When I yell, go for him or it's curtains!"

IN HIS own heart he did not think that even Wykoff's addition could change the end. Never had he felt such power as this Negro had. But he heard Wykoff get up and brace himself and he took hope. As the *remede-maker* heard Lamar's voice and the strange words, he exerted his enormous strength and the doctor arched backward. But he summoned all his strength to twist loose.

"Now!" he gasped.

He heard Wykoff suck in his breath. Then the radio man struck and literally climbed Godchaux's body. Godchaux roared in rage but he had to release one hand to fight off this new attack. One wild sweep nearly smashed Wykoff against the stone. Wykoff went down with a crash.

Hugh Lamar twisted with all his strength, buried his bloody fist in the Negro's stomach and tore backwards. He broke the hold and darted sideward, praying that he could find the gun that had been twisted from his grasp.

Theogene Godchaux was on him

like a flash. But as he seized Hugh Lamar, he suddenly froze as if paralyzed and did not exert his strength.

Into the stony enclosure had come a new sound. A mellow blend of voices was singing:

Lead kindly light, and the encircling gloom.
Lead them on. . . .

"Angels sing!" Theogene Godchaux screamed.

Hugh Lamar smashed the Negro in the throat. He twisted loose, kicked the jacklight and, as its beam circled the floor, it glittered on the butt of the pistol. Hugh Lamar swooped on it.

"It's a trick!" Godchaux howled. "They are not angels! That box—"

He did not finish, but dived forward, clubbing down his fists.

Hugh Lamar took no chances. As the big blue-black body came diving through the air, he emptied the gun's six chambers into the Negro's body, starting with the stomach and working up. Theogene Godchaux staggered backward as the bullets played a hollow tattoo on the breadth of his chest. He whirled, staggered sideward, and stood coughing, gagging, sobbing in his throat.

"We are bringing you the Motthausen Choral Society's program from America's only skyscraper church," the magic radio murmured.

Then:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me. . . .

Hugh Lamar gazed dumfoundedly. What kept the Negro upright? Blood spurted from six holes, two bullets must have penetrated the heart cavity. Yet the giant blue-black Negro swayed there, his face thin blue in color, his eyes walled.

"Angels' music come for me," he croaked hoarsely.

And then (Hugh Lamar swore to this) Godchaux turned and walked through a door into a neighboring room. Lamar picked up the jack-

light and followed the wounded man.

There was a huge canopied French bed at least a hundred years old in this room. Theogene Godchaux was lying on it, sprawled face upward, eyes staring. The chorus came:

Let me hide myself in Thee.

"Look—Karl Posser!" Wykoff suddenly sobbed. "Why, he's been dead for weeks."

Hugh Lamar did not reply. Slowly he swung the jacklight so that it illumined the wall at which Theogene Godchaux's dead eyes were staring. On that wall, Lamar knew, was the reason why the giant Negro had defied instant death long enough to walk in here and lie on the bed.

The jacklight radiance revealed an old steel engraving of the kind used in French and English homes of a hundred years ago. It was a steel engraving of four chubby little angels, fluttering, hovering on their outspread wings, smiling with the wonder of a Da Vinci smile, and tossing roses that gently floated down as if toward the dead *remede-maker* on the bed.

Hugh Lamar studied the angels, then the queer expression on Theogene Godchaux's face. He listened a moment to the church choir on the radio:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me. . . .

He thought of the prophecy of long ago.

*Next Month: DESTINY'S ACE, a Zooming Air Story
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LACEY OF THE LEGION

By JACKSON COLE

Author of "Terror at Teruel," "The Fight for Freedom," etc.



"My noose fell over the wild stallion's head,"
Lacey told the colonel

COLONEL BRULIER'S voice, roaring up out of his office, rang out over the compound grounds.

The three legionnaires who were sitting cross-legged and somnolent over a game of baccarat, cocked their

Captain Bill Lacey, Intrepid Foreign Legionnaire, Takes Time by the Forelock to Smash at Grim Conspiring Foes!

heads. One of them, Sergeant Shark Charcot, removed the stubby pipe from his mouth and pointed up at the sky with it.

"When the colonel shouts, the sun hides behind a cloud," he said dryly.

Again the colonel's voice roared up from below.

"Where's Captain Lacey!"

"Where's Lacey, he asks," the sergeant went on, preparing to get to his feet. "*Mon colonel* sits in his cool, below-stairs regimental office and asks of the world in general: where is Lacey? No one answers, because no one ever knows. The whole garrison blesses the inaction that permits us to sit in the shade of the barrack-eaves, but Captain Lacey, contrariwise, is out there in the desert somewhere getting sunburned. Woe is me—I am my captain's keeper."

Charcot rose to his full five-feet-four and stretched.

"Don't stack the deck on me, *mes frères*. I go down to tell the colonel that my lack of knowledge about Lacey's whereabouts is as deep as a well and as complete as Diderot's Encyclopedia. Be on hand to catch me when I get kicked upstairs."

Charcot crossed the compound grounds and descended the outside staircase leading to the santum sanctorum of Pierre Brulier, colonel commanding the first regiment of the French Foreign Legion. He knocked on the door.

A voice roared: "*Entrez!*"

SERGEANT CHARCOT, the humorous Frenchman, became Charcot, the soldierly sergeant. He entered stiffly, crossed to the desk, saluted, and blinked before the lightnings flashing out at him from beneath bushy, gray eyebrows.

"*Merci!*" Colonel Brulier boomed out with ironic thunder. "So at last someone has come to tell me where Captain Lacey is!"

"*Non, mon colonel,*" Charcot cor-

rected mildly. "I have come to tell you where Captain Lacey is not."

"Indeed?" said the colonel, his voice becoming deceptively mild. "And where, if I may be permitted to ask, is Captain Lacey—*not?*"

"He is not here," Charcot said simply.

Colonel Brulier's mouth corners quivered slightly. Charcot considered this an encouraging sign.

"Admittedly a negative response, *mon colonel,*" he went on. "It reminds me of the answer once made to me by a New York waitress whom I asked to bring me a cup of coffee without cream. 'Sorry, *Monsieur,*' she said, 'but we have not the cream. You will have to take it without milk.'"

Again the colonel's mouth quivered, more markedly this time, and Charcot's ears opened for the sounds of laughter, for even a chuckle. None came.

"When did you last see Captain Lacey?" Brulier demanded grimly.

"Last night, sir, at 'lights out,'" Charcot replied. "As you know, I am privileged to share the captain's room. The captain went to bed at the same time I did. But when I awakened at five this morning, he was gone. I investigated. His horse was gone, too."

"Lacey never does things without a reason," Brulier muttered, more to himself than to Charcot. He shot a worried glance at the table where reposed the radio outfit.

"Lacey either does things for a reason or for the hell of it," Charcot made bold to correct. "And sometimes he considers the latter reason enough. Incidentally, Sergeant Murzok is missing, too."

"That does not surprise me," said the colonel impatiently. "That Algerian *tirailleur* has become Lacey's shadow. I never saw two men of such divergent cultures take to each other so quickly and understand each other so well. But name of a pig,

where can they be? Who but a fool would be out in the desert on a day like this unless he had to? I won't have it, Sergeant! I have already given orders that nobody leaves this post at night without my knowledge. That crazy American will have to be disciplined. I'll reduce his rank! I'll take away his cognac! I'll take away Murzok—"

"Take him and welcome, Colonel!" a strong voice spoke from the doorway. "He almost cost me the best horse in all Algiers!"

Captain Lacey stood on the threshold.

He was tall, straight, and gave an instant impression of controlled strength. There was a stern set to his features, but far back in his eyes there were glints of laughter that took the edge off much of his grimness. Here, a keen observer would have noted, was a man who took chances, but who also weighed them. Here was a man to whom danger and excitement were meat and drink, but who would not willingly subject others to the dangers he took in his stride.

Here was, in short, Lacey of the Legion, whose past no comrade questioned and whose background men could only guess at, who could out-drink, out-ride, out-shoot and out-fence any man in his regiment, and who kept his medals in a small wooden chest rather than on his own broad one. His first name was Bill.

HE CROSSED to the desk, saluted the colonel smartly. Out of the corner of his mouth he muttered: "Morning, Shark," at Sergeant Charcot. Charcot preserved a diplomatic silence.

"Where have you been?" Colonel Brulier asked with deceptive mildness.

"It's a long story, Colonel," Lacey began.

"Make it short," the colonel said.

"Short it is," Lacey said. "Yester-

day, while on patrol with Murzok, I saw a horse. It had no rider, no saddle. It was white and very wonderful—a semi-wild stallion. Murzok made out he didn't see it, and so did I, because when it comes to our lives we're brothers, but when it comes to a horse like that, he's a Montague and I'm a Capulet, and we hate each other's guts.

"What happens? I rise at midnight, saddle up and go hunting for that white chunk of living lightning. I run into Murzok on the desert. Two minds with but a single thought. But when it comes to horses, we're not on speaking terms. The moon and the stars are out, and we spot the stallion not far from the post, silhouetted atop a dune, and nickering a love-call to the mares in our troop.

"Then begins the stillest hunt since the days of Nimrod. We walk that horse down. For hours and hours we walk him down, not speaking to each other. And at last we're within roping distance. Two ropes snake out, but Murzok's is a little faster—which I expect it to be. So where our two ropes converge on the diagonals, my noose grazes his just enough to deflect it downward—and my noose settles gracefully around that white beauty's neck. Murzok concedes my victory. Eh, Murzok?"

A short, bearded man in the garb of a native Algerian sergeant had entered as Lacey was completing his tale. Now he grinned out of his beard and took up the story in voluble French, his dark eyes flashing.

"*Mais oui!* The captain's words make the scene to live again. I lose. He wins. But we remain friends. And the captain, he says I am part owner of White Lightning with him. I own back part. American joke."

Murzok laughed. Lacey laughed. Charcot laughed. Colonel Brulier looked blank. Then the commander stood up and spoke.

"Had you forgotten, Captain

Lacey," he said, "that I gave express orders for no one to leave this post between dark and dawn without my permission?"

"No, Colonel Brulier," replied Lacey stiffly, his smile fading. "But I thought—"

"That order included officers as well as men," interrupted the colonel icily. "I know that you are fully aware of the imminent danger of trouble with Bas Rasulli in this area. The Nazis have been most active among the Tuaregs in their attempts to foment a rebellion. Reports of spies have been confirmed by radio dispatches. This is a strategic position which we must hold at all costs. I cannot risk the loss of a single man until the present crisis is past. You had complete knowledge of the reasons behind my orders. You are guilty of a serious breach of discipline."

"Yes, *mon colonel*," admitted Lacey, saluting. "I am sorry. But the stallion was so close to the fort, and he was such a magnificent animal. But you are quite right, sir. I repeat, I am sorry."

"Humph!" growled the colonel, scarcely mollified. "Captain Lacey, you will place yourself in the custody of Sergeant Charcot and be conducted by him to the guardhouse where you will remain to meditate upon the subject of army discipline for a period of one month. Thirty days' restraint may be a lesson to you. That is all. Dismiss!"

FOR an instant, the light that flashed up in Bill Lacey's eyes was like that of an animal caught in a trap. He was envisaging thirty days' confinement. To a man like him, they loomed up like a lifetime. Then the fierceness went out of his eyes, and he smiled crookedly, spoke softly.

"So be it, Colonel. For the good of the Legion. Discipline, that's the thing. Okay, Shark—take me away."

Charcot complied. Murzok was left alone with the colonel.

"Why does the colonel leave me free?" Murzok asked. "I am as much at fault as the captain."

Colonel Brulier sat down, swung around on his swivel-chair so that Murzok could not see his face.

"I am leaving you free to break in Captain Lacey's new horse," he said.

* * * * *

The entire thirty years of Bill Lacey's life had passed more quickly, so it seemed to him, than the first week of the thirty days he was confined. It did not matter that the entire post had entered into a tacit conspiracy to lighten the monotony of his imprisonment. It did not matter that they serenaded him under his barred window before "lights out," kept him supplied with smokes, and kept him informed of the progress Murzok was making in breaking in White Lightning.

One night he said to Charcot, peering out from behind the bars at the face of the sergeant:

"Shark, I don't know how much longer I can stand this. I've been a sailor in my time, but I could never sleep below decks on a ship. A cabin was like a coffin to me. Now this cell is like a grave. Shark, I'm afraid of myself. I may strangle the guard some night, snatch the key, and let myself out."

"The guard hasn't got the key," said Charcot. "I have."

"I might strangle you."

"I'll risk it," said Charcot philosophically. "Have patience. A month is not an eternity. Perhaps Colonel Brulier will relent. Are you bitter against him?"

"I'm bitter against no one. After all, how could he let me go on breaking the rules? I practically forced him into doing this to me by ignoring a specific order."

"Besides," said Charcot, "if you attempt to escape, you may be shot and killed—which would mean con-

finement in a far narrower house than this, and for a much longer time. Or, if you were caught without being killed, you would be returned to confinement for triple the term."

"Three months would kill me," Lacey groaned.

"Any man can stand a month. A month is only a month—just the time it takes the moon to make one circle around the earth."

"The moon's free. How's Murzok making out with Lightning?"

"Murzok and Lightning are like one. Murzok has broken the white beauty to saddle and bridle without sacrificing an ounce of the white one's fire."

"How fast is he?"

"He's brother to the wind. Hush!"

A mounted figure drew between the sergeant and the barred window. It was Murzok, and he rode Lightning. He had come to introduce the horse to its rightful master.

"He is ready for you, Captain," Murzok said softly. "He can almost talk. Talk to him. Put your hand on him, make him know you."

Captain Bill Lacey had a way with horses. He had the voice and the touch.

MMURZOK came every night with the horse henceforth. Horse and master came to know each other. All that was missing was the weight of Lacey on Lightning's back.

The third week wore on. The chief subject of conversation in the post was how Lacey was bearing his captivity. Opinion differed. Some held that Lacey was getting used to it, others that he was merely suffering but saying nothing. The latter was true. Much as the nocturnal visits helped, they did not help enough. Lacey's passion for freedom was becoming overwhelming.

Stripped to the waist, he paced the pen for hours at a time. Then, perching himself upon a stool, he

would peer out through the bars to observe the familiar routine of the post. Then back to his pacing again, back to the stool. At mealtimes he found himself without appetite. At night he found himself wakeful.

In desperation, he penciled a note to Colonel Brulier, petitioning for his release ahead of time. Then, about to give it to the guard, he tore it up and ate the pieces. Brulier, so appealed to, might yield, and that would be bad for discipline. Nor did Lacey want anyone ever to know that he had succumbed to the weakness of even thinking of asking for mercy. If ever a man can be said to have eaten his words, Lacey ate his, which had run as follows:

Dear Colonel:

Rip off my bars, take away my rank, my medals, Murzok, Lightning. Only let me out of here before I beat my brains out against the bars of this cage!

Lacey.

Whether or not Lacey, growing more tigerish in his captivity every day, would have reached the stage of making good his threat, he was never to know. Two things happened.

On the morning of his twenty-eighth day of captivity, a lone Tuareg rider was described by the lookout approaching the post. The ramparts were instantly manned, lest this rider be but a pretext to get the gates opened, whereupon a host of Tuaregs, camouflaged against the dunes, should burst in upon the unsuspecting garrison. Bas Rasulli was full of such tricks.

But this rider was truly alone. He was admitted. Lacey, peering through the bars, saw him being conducted toward Brulier's office. An hour later, he came up, accompanied by Brulier. The colonel was in full dress uniform.

"Peace treaty stuff," Lacey muttered. "But why the devil is Brulier going? Why don't they come to him? I don't like the looks of it. I wish Shark—here he comes now."

But Charcot paused in the middle of the compound, hands on hips, and shouted as only a Legion sergeant could shout:

"First platoon—prepare to mount."

"Well, at least Brulier's going out with a platoon in daylight," Lacey muttered. "Why the hell doesn't Shark slip me some word about what's in the wind?"

FIVE minutes later Charcot did slip him word. He had to do it in installments. The first platoon, fully accoutred and mounted, was drawn up and ready to ride. The end of the platoon was near the guardhouse window. Charcot rode up and down its length, inspecting it, and the information, as Lacey got it, ran somewhat as follows:

"Bas Rasulli, chief of the Tuaregs, wants to sign a peace treaty at the Oasis of the Ouid Drid. Why does the mountain have to go to Mohammed? Well, Rasulli thinks he'd lose face with his Tuaregs if he came here. Brulier is willing to grant him that point. Why is Brulier taking only a platoon? Well, to take a whole company would imply that he doesn't trust Rasulli. He doesn't, but in the game of diplomacy, one must take chances. We'd all feel safer if you were along. *Au revoir, mon ami.*"

A minute later Murzok rode up to the window, mounted on a black charger. When he rode off, the key to the jail rested on the window ledge. Murzok had stolen it from Charcot. Lacey transferred it to his pocket.

A bugle rang out clear and sweet. The platoon galloped through the gate. Simultaneously the jail door opened, and Rasulli's emissary was thrust in. Evidently he was to be held as a hostage until the treaty was signed. He ignored Lacey, curled up in a corner and proceeded to go to sleep.

His sleep, if he was really sleep-

ing, was short. Scarcely fifteen minutes after the departure of Brulier and the platoon, the bugle blew again, sounding "general assembly."

Lacey leaped to the window. The whole garrison was assembling. Orders were being barked. What in hell was going on?

"What's up?" Lacey roared. "Where you all going? Lieutenant Calderon! What's up?"

With Brulier absent, and Lacey in the guardhouse, Lieutenant Calderon, a swarthy Spaniard, had been left in command.

Lieutenant Calderon heard Lacey's shouts, and his eyes flickered. He was debating whether or not to release Lacey. Discipline won, and he decided against it. But, when the garrison was ready to ride, he rode up to the barred window.

"Radio message from El Mahrug Post," he said. "They are being besieged. Their well has run dry, and we've got to lift the siege from the outside. *Adios!*"

"It's a trick!" Lacey snapped.

But Calderon shook his head and rode away. The bugle sounded, and in less than a minute the garrison was an all but deserted fortress. Two prisoners, the guard, the guard relief, the lookout, the mess sergeant, and three riflemen on the ramparts were the only ones remaining.

Lacey descended from his perch, began to pace up and down, his brain roiling.

"It doesn't add up straight!" he thought. "Brulier is being sucked into something. Brulier is drawn away with a platoon. Then, as though the thing had been timed, a radio message comes in and draws out the remainder of the garrison. Brulier couldn't take a chance on neglecting a peace bid, with the Nazis so active among the Tuaregs. Calderon, in turn, couldn't take a chance on disbelieving a message from El Mahrug Post. If both messages are false, then both Brulier and Calderon have

been outguessed and out-timed. But what would I have done in their place? I don't know. . . ."

His hand strayed to his pocket, felt the key.

"Anyway, I'm getting out of here—now."

HE DUCKED suddenly, his right arm shot up, seized a wrist. A knife-blade grazed his cheek. He twisted around, twisting the wrist of Rasulli's emissary at the same time. The knife clattered on the floor, and the Tuareg went down with it. Lacey's free hand seized the knife, put its point to the Tuareg's throat.

"Talk truth or you die!" he rasped. "Does Rasulli want peace?"

Terror-stricken, the Tuareg shook his head.

"Is El Mahrug under siege?"

"The message did not come from El Mahrug," admitted the Tuareg.

"Who sent it?"

"The blond ones."

"The Nazis, eh? All right."

The next instant, the Tuareg was truly asleep, smashed into that condition by a blow to the jaw.

Lacey got into his uniform, buckled on his sword. Brulier had not subjected him to the indignity of taking his sword away from him.

The next instant, with two days of his sentence still to go, Lacey found himself out of jail. He ran into the guard.

"Larsen!" he snapped. "Emergency. Don't ask questions, don't try to stop me out of a mistaken sense of duty! Your colonel is in danger, and I'm leaving the post."

The guard stepped aside. "Captain Lacey may go where he wishes," he said. "Even if I'm shot for it."

Lacey dashed for the stables. An instant later the gates were swung open, and he galloped out upon the desert. He rode White Lightning.

It was a strange piece of irony that the horse which had got him

into trouble was now the only instrument that could get the entire garrison out of it!

The trail of Calderon's company was like a broad highway. White Lightning's speed exceeded all expectations. Precious time had been lost—but this was a horse! And Lacey was a rider!

Lacey overtook the company. He roared out all the details of the situation so that the entire company could hear.

"If we move fast, we can block the game, rescue the platoon, and, by smashing the Tuaregs, prevent usurpation of our post. Follow me to the Ouid Drid!"

He whirled the stallion and Lieutenant Calderon roared an order, and they followed. But Lacey was mounted on a horse that seemed to have wings. They dropped behind. But his trail was clear. They followed that.

The sun beat down upon the dunes, and upon a streak of red mounted on a streak of white. With a sense of direction like a homing pigeon's, Lacey pointed for the oasis of Ouid Drid. Behind him thundered Calderon's command. So incredibly fast was the horse that, when Lacey heard shots, he could scarcely believe he was already so near his objective. He topped a dune, saw the oasis, saw dead horses, dead men in the foreground. He spied movement in a depression between two dunes, made out two familiar figures—Charcot and Murzok. Bullets kicked up the sand about them, and they were returning the fire from the oasis. Where was Colonel Brulier?

Lacey reached them. They rose to a crouch beside White Lightning, their rifles hot in their hands.

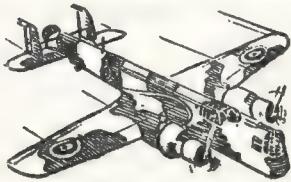
"Treachery!" Charcot gasped. "They attacked as we neared the oasis. Several of us are dead. They shot our horses out from under us. They rode off with Colonel Brulier. They've got him now."

"Run, Charcot!" Lacey ordered, his quick eyes taking in details of the terrain. "Round up the balance of the platoon hiding in these dunes. We will charge the oasis from this side. I will lead. Murzok! Take White Lightning. Ride quickly back the way I came, contact Lieutenant Calderon, instruct him to attack the oasis at once from the west. We'll pinch that devil, Bas Rasulli, between us."

BOTH sergeants saluted and hastened to obey orders. A whining bullet from the oasis zipped

midst of a group of burnoosed tribesmen Lacey saw the figure of Colonel Brulier struggling furiously. He ran forward and engaged a wiry Arab who wielded a vicious curved sword. At Lacey's back the legionnaires plunged into the mêlée with bayonets fixed. Screams and howls and curses arose. The tribesmen, headed by the bearded and hawklike Rasulli, rallied and stiffened against the mad attack.

It was bloody, terrible combat, and the odds were against the soldiers. Lacey, fighting desperately, ran his sword through his wiry op-



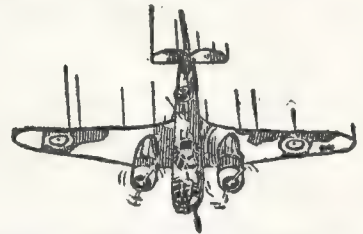
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DESTINY'S ACE

By

H. RALPH GOLLER

*One of the Many Outstanding Yarns
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through Lacey's kepi as he ducked down to follow Charcot. A bugle call sounded. Men began appearing, bobbing up from the shifting sands to rally around Lacey, shouting and cheering. With guns blazing, they raced down the slope and into the oasis with its fringe of date trees. Here and there a man dropped, but the surviving members of the treacherously assaulted platoon grimly ran on, following Lacey and anxious to put cold steel to work.

They burst upon the Tuaregs like a blue and red tidal wave. In the

ponent and fought to reach Rasulli who stood beside the two men grappling with Colonel Brulier and shrieked orders.

And then, from the west, came the clear notes of a bugle playing the charge. And Calderon's troop rode like a stampeding horde into the oasis. This rear attack demoralized the tribesmen. They melted away and fled for the dubious sanctity of the burning desert, abandoning their leader, their horses, their camels.

Colonel Brulier promptly grabbed the billowing skirts of Bas Rasulli,

and Lacey dropped his sword to plant a haymaker on the wily desert chieftain's chin. Rasulli grunted, staggered back against the colonel, and crumpled to the ground.

That settled the fight. At Brulier's order one of the buglers sounded the recall, and the men came back to reform in ragged platoons. Colonel Brulier looked from the unconscious Bas Rasulli to the bloody Lacey with the red and dripping sword which he had retrieved.

"Humph!" he said. "What's this all about?"

Lacey grinned, wiped away the sweat, and explained.

"So I broke jail, *mon colonel*," he concluded. "That means another three months—for discipline, I suppose."

Colonel Brulier cleared his throat. There was a suspicious gleam in his eyes.

"How many days, Captain Lacey," he asked, "did you serve?"

"Twenty-eight, sir."

The colonel nodded. "I sentenced you to a month, if I remember. Twenty-eight days are four weeks. Four weeks are a month. *Alors*, you have served your disciplinary sentence. Further, you have been instrumental in removing the cause of my orders." And he indicated the unconscious chieftain. "So we will take Bas Rasulli back to the fort to continue our peaceful negotiations. And if he is recalcitrant—he shall serve the three months for you—Bill."

It was the first time the colonel had ever called Lacey by his first name. The men cheered faintly before going about caring for the dead and wounded. Sergeants Charcot and Murzok grinned at each other. And White Lightning snorted in complete approval.

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"Come on, Kirby," Pee-wee squealed. "Snap into it. Get to work!"

Stroke Kirby Rests On His Oars—Till He Catches a Crab That Makes Him Fight Grimly for His Life!

BIG Jim Kirby braced his feet against the stretcher and settled his hundred and eighty pounds on the spray-wet thwart. Behind him he heard a nervous shuffle.

Men cleared their throats and jiggled leathers in the oar-locks. There was wind blowing through the Golden Gate, kicking whitecaps across the gray-green brightness of San Fran-

cisco Bay. The wind lifted Big Jim Kirby's short, tawny hair and raised goose-flesh under the tan of his wide shoulders.

In one minute, he would be warm. In two minutes, pulling stroke for the *Austin's* whaleboat crew, he would be sweating. But not too much. Big Jim Kirby, six feet one of lazy, supple strength, didn't believe in working up too much of a sweat.

He looked out of the corner of his gray eyes. Next lane to starboard, the *Tennessee's* whaleboat jockeyed the starting line. Big Jim's lip curled with good-natured scorn. He had been told the Rebel ship's whaleboat crew consisted entirely of marines. Beyond the *Tennessee* boat was the *Maryland's*. On the port side, the *Vestal's* stroke grinned over at him.

"Better rig your ears for sails, you guys!" the *Vestal's* stroke called. "You'll need the wind!"

Somebody in the starter's boat shouted for silence. Big Jim pulled his eyes front and looked into the tense, contorted face of Peewee Morris, the cox'n. Peewee was hunched high in the stern-sheets, his knuckles already white from gripping the tiller.

"Give 'em everything you got, ship-mates!" Peewee pleaded in a hoarse whisper. "The Old Man's counting on us. He wants that Battenberg Cup!"

Big Jim Kirby grunted. There was no use killing yourself. This was one of the final eliminations, to be sure, but the *Austin* could win it in a walk, Big Jim knew. It was a hodge-podge elimination race held among the warships which happened to be in the Twelfth Naval District at the time—two battlewagons, the repair ship *Vestal*, and the new heavy cruiser *Austin*.

It seemed to Big Jim that a lot of energy would be going to waste, anyway. The Battenberg Cup race was scheduled at San Pedro next week, and the *Austin* was in the Navy Yard at Mare Island. She'd be there more than a month, undergoing alterations

to her blower system. A swell chance her whaleboat crew had, trying for the Battenberg Cup!

The gun cracked. He heard Peewee's thin voice.

"Give way together!"

His blade dipped and bit. He leaned back with his arms still straight before him, and then pulled his big hands against his chest and feathered the oar. Eleven men, eleven oars, were doing the same. The heavy whaleboat's thirty foot length began to move through the slapping waves.

AROUND the four lanes, bedlam broke loose. The *Tennessee's* band struck up "Dixie" from a motor launch. Two tugs loaded with *Maryland* rooters cruised abreast of the crews and sent steam pluming from shrieking whistles. The *Austin* was not to be outdone. Her crew had chartered a Vallejo ferry and threatened to capsize it as they all rushed to the port rail to watch and cheer.

"Stroke," piped Peewee. "Stroke, stroke."

Pulling effortlessly, with the rhythm of a machine, Big Jim Kirby had to grin to himself. Peewee was the cox'n, but Big Jim was the stroke. It was he who really set the pace for Kowalski, Jones, Molino, Janssen, and the rest. Peewee would have them worked into a frenzy if they followed him. In every race, Peewee expected them to exert themselves supremely.

Big Jim dug deep and pulled. He wasn't even sweating yet. He wasn't even breathing hard. The *Maryland's* boat was out in front by half a length, and so what? They'd cut her down before the mile and a half was done. And they wouldn't have to kill themselves doing it, either.

"Stroke!" Peewee squealed. "Come on, Kirby, snap into it, there! Get to work. Stroke, stroke."

Big Jim didn't answer. A good boat crew was always silent, and even Big Jim was proud that the *Austin's* whaleboat crew was tops. He just

grinned and kept on at his even pace.

Around him was the swish and ripple of water, the welter of the wind and the rattle of oar-locks. He heard the dimmed music of the *Austin's* band in the ferry's stub bow. The *Maryland's* rooters were wild because their boat led by a length. The sun caught the *Maryland's* boat in its streak and made black silhouettes of the swaying men. Gold dripped from the feathering blades. Then those gyrenes from the *Tennessee*, trying hard, came abreast of the *Austin's* crew.

Big Jim saw them and scornfully stepped up his pace. He still didn't increase it to the tempo of Peewee's body. They weren't quite halfway down the course, and there was plenty of time to go.

When they reached the halfway point, Big Jim was just sweating comfortably. The wind felt cool and refreshing on his shoulders, and his muscles had the snap and zing of good, tough rubber. They ridged and rippled over the flat of his stomach. They corded across his back.

With every pull of the oar, he could feel it bend and feel the whaleboat surge forward swiftly. All twelve men in the *Austin's* crew were pulling with the steady, clean rhythm of a pendulum.

The *Maryland's* boat fought gallantly from there on. It was nip and tuck, bow and bow, for a quarter of a mile on the home stretch. The *Austin's* chartered ferry kept up a hoarse tooting. She was far enough on the port side to avoid making swells in the racing lanes. But Big Jim could have sworn he saw the Old Man on her deck, and he was certain that the Old Man was swearing.

Big Jim stepped up the stroke another notch. The *Austin's* whaleboat nosed into the lead. He saw the *Maryland's* gray bulk in Man-o'-War Row, well beyond the towering wonder of the Bay Bridge. The *Tennessee* was anchored near, and this was the finish

point. He glanced sidewise and saw the *Maryland's* boat trailing by nearly two lengths—

Something happened, then. Big Jim sensed a break in the rhythm more than he heard the splash behind him, and the bang of oar blades. Kowalski, the big Pole from Detroit, had caught a crab.

Peewee yelled. A wild shout went up from the nearest tug carrying the *Maryland* rooters. Big Jim Kirby set his jaw and dug in. The *Austin's* boat crawled over the line, winner by less than a length. And even Big Jim Kirby knew that it wouldn't have won if the *Maryland's* crew hadn't been dead tired on their oars. . . .

THE Old Man waited until the next morning. Word was passed for the athletic officer, and then for Peewee Morris. Peewee came around and mustered the whaleboat crew one by one. All of the twelve went with the little cox'n to the skipper's cabin. The athletic officer had gone, and the marine orderly showed the crew inside.

He was a funny looking guy, the Old Man—no bigger than Peewee, when it came to height, although the years had filled him in. They had taken the hair off his head, too, and put crow's-feet at the outer corners of a pair of eyes that looked like chunks of blue ice. He had other lines in his face, mostly the kind that develop from setting your teeth grimly and keeping them that way.

He stopped pacing the deck and whirled toward them. They sprang to attention. The Old Man let them stand that way for a minute, while his eyes went over each one. His eyes were cold, but they blazed, too.

"At ease," the Old Man said finally.

He had a voice that would carry from the taffrail to the eyes of the ship, and make a man jump when it reached there.

"You're a fine whaleboat crew," he growled. They wanted to shift from

one foot to the other and look at their big red hands. "I really mean it," he went on. "You're one of those crews that can be found only once in a hundred years—twelve men who work together as perfectly as two men could work! Twelve men with stamina and strength and rhythm. You're a fine crew, all right."

The lazy smile was crossing Big Jim Kirby's face. It was about time somebody gave them a hand, he thought.

"And you're a rotten crew!" roared the Old Man. Everybody jumped. He came around from behind his desk and paced the deck before them. "You're rotten because you think you're too good. You're saving yourselves—for what? For a really big race! And no big race is won that way. You've got to learn what it means to dig in and fight. You've got to win the easy races by more than a length if you're going to win the big ones at all."

Somebody had to say something. It was up to Peewee Morris. Peewee gulped and managed to get out a mumble.

"Yes, sir. Aye, aye, sir."

The Old Man whirled on Peewee, and they were almost two of a size.

"You got to learn to yell! I couldn't hear your voice at all. I doubt that the Number One man could hear you in your own boat."

"Yes, sir," Peewee said meekly.

"And you, Kirby. When the cox'n steps up the stroke, you're supposed to follow. Nobody but the cox'n can see what's going on. What was the matter with you, Kirby—Tired?"

"No, sir," Kirby said. He was a little sullen, a bit annoyed by this school-boy stuff. They had won, hadn't they? "I knew we were ahead, sir," he added lamely. "I knew we'd win. It was in the bag."

"So you won easily," said the Old Man sarcastically. "That's the trouble with this crew. You've been too good for the crews you've raced. Well,

you'll have it different in the Battenberg Cup race!"

PEEWEE'S face unscrewed into an elated smile.

"Are we going, sir? How can we get to Pedro in time for the race, sir?"

"You ought not to be allowed to go," growled the Old Man. His voice grew softer. "But you are going. We're taking the money out of Ship's Service funds to send you down on the train and ship the whaleboat with you. The race is Saturday. We can be back at the Yard in time for quarters Monday morning. I—I'm going, too. The Battenberg Cup means a lot to me—Ought to mean a lot to any Navy man. Know anything about the Battenberg Cup, Kirby?"

Big Jim wet his lips. "No, sir."

"Thought you didn't." A far-away look came into the Old Man's bleak eyes. When he started talking again, he might have been reciting. "The cup was given to the enlisted men of the old Atlantic Fleet on May eighteenth, Nineteen-six, by the enlisted men of the British Second Cruiser Squadron, then commanded by Prince Louis of Battenberg. Fighting Bob Evans was commanding the Atlantic Fleet. The old *Illinois* first won the cup. I was on her."

He stated the last fact with a great deal of pride. For a minute he paused while he paced the deck. Then he hammered his desk, and the hardness came back into his voice.

"Fighting Bob Evans would never have won any fight or any race by a length. Not if he could win by six lengths! Remember that when you dip your oars at San Pedro. That's all, men. The rest is up to you."

Outside, Big Jim Kirby growled with wounded dignity.

"Pep talk. You'd think the Old Man was Knute Rockne. What does he know about whaleboat racing, about any kind of racing? The little runt. Why, the drag of an oar would pull him over the gunwale!"

The others laughed, too, because they knew how good they were. Only Peewee Morris screwed up his face and wondered how much the Old Man really knew. He went to see the athletic officer, and asked questions.

Peewee told them what he had found out as the train clicked southward along the night-shrouded California coast. It was a black night with an unseasonal blast from the west. When they stopped at stations, the twelve men of the crew could hear thunder muttering and see the brilliant play of lightning out over the Coast Range.

"The Old Man?" said Peewee, jerking his thumb back toward the next Pullman where the skipper rode in civilian clothes. "He knows plenty about boat races. They say he's a sort of tradition at the Academy. He was cox'n of two winning crews at Poughkeepsie."

Big Jim Kirby's lazy smile curled with scorn. Racing shells were light and built for speed. It was a cinch to drive them through the water. Eight men could work together better than twelve.

"So he was a cox'n," said Big Jim. "That explains it. Cox'ns always know everything. Stroke doesn't know anything at all."

"Lay off," replied Peewee. "In his last year, the Old Man drove that crew to victory by a good six lengths. The crew gave him the deep six. It's the custom back there when they win. They tossed him over the side, and the river was choppy. He had a megaphone strapped around his chin. The water came into it just like water in a funnel when he tried to swim. The Old Man damn near drowned."

"Well," said Molino. "Academy racing ain't got nothing to do with enlisted men. Why's he so nuts about the Battenberg Cup? It's an enlisted man's trophy. He said so. He was on the *Illinois* when she won it, but he couldn't have had nothing to do with winnin' it. He was an officer."

Peewee Morris considered. "Maybe he was athletic officer. Maybe he coached the crew."

"The Old Man's all right," volunteered Janssen.

"Sure," agreed Big Jim Kirby. He snorted. "Sure he's all right. He's a swell skipper. But as long as we win, he has no right to crab. He can't tell us off about whaleboats, when all he knows is shells."

Big Jim leaned his forehead against the window and saw lightning gleam on the white smother of surf. While he watched, the first oversized drop of rain splashed on the glass and was streaked by the wind. A sheet of water followed it, spreading a blur over the window.

The engine shrieked its loneliness, far ahead in the dark night. Above the click of the rail joints, the rain continued its steady torrent. It was as if the wind had scooped up half the Pacific and was driving it against the coast.

"Let's turn in," yawned Big Jim. "According to the Old Man, we've got a hard day ahead of us."

THEY split up and went to their berths.

The first jolt awakened Kirby. He lay listening to the drone of the rain and an intermittent crash that roared above the drone. He dozed briefly, woke again and wondered why they were not moving. When he raised the window shade, a lantern bobbed past, and then another.

Beyond all this, a brightness vivid as lightning streaked the sky and suddenly changed from white to red—a blood-red that dripped from the rain-filled blackness to glow on the dirty, heaving surf. Big Jim Kirby sat up, wide awake. The wind didn't scatter lightning the way that light had plumed. Lightning wasn't that color.

He heard somebody in the aisle. When he parted the curtains, he saw the Pullman conductor.

"Washout," the train official said.

"We may be held up quite awhile. Better go back to sleep."

"What are the rockets for?" Big Jim asked.

"There's a ship out there. The brakeman's hiking for a telephone. Some pretty bad rocks in this vicinity. This ain't far from Point Honda. You know, the place where those destroyers hit a few years back."

"A ship!" Big Jim cried. "My God, in this storm!"

He was already scrambling into his clothes. Some of the other men were awake, and the noise they made soon aroused the others. They ran to the vestibule, forced open the door. Violently rain slashed in at them.

Yonder in the streaming wilderness, a rocket bloodied the sky and the sea. Big Jim fancied he could hear the hiss and sputter of the powder.

"She's about a quarter mile off shore," he muttered.

Somebody jostled his back. Giving gangway, he saw the Old Man.

The captain was fully dressed, a felt hat drawn low over his bushy eyebrows.

"The nearest Coast Guard station is too far away," he said. "It's up to the Navy. And"—he looked from one to another—"we're the Navy."

"Yes, sir," said Big Jim. "What can we do, Captain?"

"I don't know, yet. Let's get closer."

AIMING the flashlight in his hand, he led the way into the dark rain and down the high embankment. Up around the engine, lanterns shed their bobbling circles of light. The struggling headlight pointed out shining rails that came to an abrupt end. From there on was a black gap through which water poured savagely, roaring down the gully where the trestle had stood.

It was only a short distance from the embankment to the sand of the beach. Now the rain had slackened to a wind-flung drizzle, but the surf hammered high and flung a violent spray

over them. The Old Man stood on a rock where the wind tugged at his stocky form. He pointed the flashlight into the blackness. It began winking.

Peewee Morris was a radio man. He piped eagerly.

"There it is, sir. I'll get it!"

A pinpoint flashed back at them from seaward, vanished briefly, and then began stuttering in dots and dashes. The Old Man grunted and handed his flash to Peewee. The little cox'n began spelling out the words slowly, painfully.

"Watson Line—tanker—*Gold Coast*. Hurlburt, master— Hit rocks bow on —stern submerged—plates ripped out —port side forward— Heavy list to port— Lifeboats smashed— Can't last much longer— Henry, radio operator."

The Old Man was gripped by a visible excitement.

"Hurlburt?" he shouted. "Hurlburt? Ask him this. Ask him if it's Horse Hurlburt, who was on the old *Illinois*."

"Aye, aye, sir."

Peewee's voice was thin in the driving, wet wind. His flashlight beam was thin, too, and feeble. It clicked off and on. It went dark, and the other flash out on the wave-swept deck of the tanker began replying.

"Hell yes who wants to know?" Peewee translated.

The Old Man jumped up and down.

"Tell him it's Shrimp Dawes!" he boomed, and glared around defensively.

Nobody chuckled at the "Shrimp." Nobody thought of the Old Man as being small, just then. He was on a rock, but he towered above them in more ways than one. There was something in the black storm that reached back across the years—

"Tell him to get a line ready so we can come after it and bring it ashore," added the Old Man. "Tell him to stand by to rig a breeches-buoy."

They all knew it couldn't be done. Big Jim Kirby, with the spray from the surf stinging against his face, knew it couldn't be done. There was

no way of doing it. But the Old Man sprang down from the rock. He started scrambling back up the embankment.

"Come on, men!" he shouted. "Stand by, Morris. Keep in communication with Hurlburt. The rest of you come with me. We'll get our whaleboat."

It couldn't be done, Big Jim Kirby told himself again. He fought his way up the sliding, slippery steepness. The Old Man was swearing softly when they reached the top. He had only one idea, which he repeated over and over.

"Horse Hurlburt! Well, I'm damned! I'll be damned! It's Horse Hurlburt!"

They went to the express car. For a moment the overalled men there tried to argue. But the Old Man bellowed and climbed in. Even a civilian could understand the ringing authority in his roar.

The twelve men came out panting under the weight of the whaleboat and its oars. As they dug in carefully with their feet to keep from falling down the bank with the load, Big Jim saw the flashlight stabbing through in the darkness.

PEEWEE was still keeping his post on his rock.

"It's Hurlburt himself, sir," he yelled. "He says for God's sake don't be a fool. He says you—"

"Tell him to go to hell," snapped the Old Man.

"Yes, sir. Aye, aye, sir. But if the whaleboat is going out, sir, you'll have to take the flash. I'm the cox'n, sir."

Big Jim Kirby felt a thrill at that. Peewee was a runt with a thin shrill of a voice. But Peewee was a man, a Navy man. . . .

"You were the cox'n," growled the Old Man. "You're not any longer. I'm going to handle the tiller this trip, Morris. All right, men! Before we go, I must tell you that this is over and above the line of duty. You're on authorized leave. Therefore I must call for volunteers. But I need twelve men."

He got twelve men. Big Jim Kirby thought:

"What the hell, the Old Man is taking a chance himself, isn't he?"

Big Jim crowded forward with the rest. The Old Man wiped the rain out of his eyes.

"Thank you," he said simply.

"Hurlburt says this is going to be tougher than manning the tiller to win the Battenberg Cup," Peewee Morris said. "He says for heaven's sake get some sense in that red head of yours."

The skipper heard the ripple of laughter with which the twelve men eased the tenseness. Red head, eh? Maybe he had had red hair when he was known as Shrimp Dawes.

"Tell him I've been bald for twenty years," snorted the Old Man. "Let's go, men. We'll carry her into the sea and catch it between waves. Numbers one, three and five will stay over the side to give her a shove. Even numbers will man the oars. If we're lucky, all hands will get aboard when I pass the word!"

"If we're lucky," Big Jim thought.

He was number six, starboard. His place was in the boat. He helped carry her down across the wet sand, and she certainly was a load even for twelve brawny men. The surf leaped at them. Cold and lashed by a furious anger, it snatched away his breath as it smashed frigidly against his stomach.

The Old Man was trotting astern, grunting under the weight. The water rushed nearly up to his neck, and then receded with a bubbling, swishing sound. Another high, dark wave came humping in toward them. It blotted out the pinpoint of light that was their guide. The rush turned to a dull, white smother that caught the bow of the whaleboat. It was all they could do to hold the craft on an even keel and keep her pointed seaward.

"Even men in!" bellowed the Old Man. His voice lifted clear and loud over the surf's boom and splash.

The whaleboat smacked the water

heavily. Big Jim Kirby tumbled over the gunwale and slammed his oar in the swivel. He heard the captain scramble to the high stern.

"Stroke!" yelled the Old Man.

Big Jim bent his oar. The whaleboat leaped forward, was caught astern by the receding wave. Everybody knew, then, that everything depended on the cox'n. Their lives depended on the skill of the Old Man who was swinging the tiller. If the boat swung too far around—if she went broadside to the next big one—they would be capsized and dragged strangling up on the beach.

CAPTAIN DAWES roared out a command that must have carried for miles.

"All hands in!"

Peewee Morris could never have shouted loud enough to make them hear. Dripping men clawed their way into the boat and fumbled with the oars. The next wave struck before they could get their blades in the water.

Big Jim Kirby saw the dim sea slant steeply before him. He was looking over and past the Old Man, down into a shallowing trough where the water sucked seaward and folded under. It seemed to take a sick, breathless age for the oars to bite into the flurry of foam that gave no hold. Big Jim shut his eyes, grunted and dug deeper. The whaleboat hung precariously on the crest.

Big Jim was soaked to the skin and cold. But he was sweating, too. He was sweating as he had never sweated in a mere boat race.

Swiftly the whaleboat was riding back toward the beach. The Old Man rasped out one roaring, salty oath and swung his tiller.

"Pull!" he bawled. "Pull, damn your lazy hides!"

The boat bucked and careened sideward. She slid along the farther side of the slant, and turned. Sickeningly her bow plunged down into the dark

waters. Big Jim's oar feathered and dug again, and the Old Man slammed his tiller back.

She straightened. They were over the hump and riding free. . . .

There was a fierce joy in the Old Man's yell.

"Now, lads, put your hearts into it. We'll make it yet. This is one race where you won't loaf! You can't win this race by one single length. You'll win it big, or not at all!"

They put their hearts into it. They went deeper and put into it all the intestinal fortitude of men defying death. The oars bent and plowed with long, powerful strokes. Each man could barely see the man ahead of him, but there was a rhythm more to be felt than seen. And there was the Old Man's leather-lunged cadence.

"Stroke! Stroke! Stroke!"

The Old Man's eyes caught the pinpoint gleam and held it. They rode another comber that threatened to capsize them. They straddled a trough when it seemed that the stout whaleboat would break in half.

Their stomachs were sick and their lungs ached with breathlessness. The swivels screamed. The oar handles burned and tore the skin from their wet palms. Sweat poured in a cold stream down Big Jim Kirby's back, and the wind plastered his soaked jumper against it. He set his jaw grimly, let the breath whistle through his bared teeth.

It came to him that no other crew could have done what they were doing. No other cox'n could have piloted them through the breakers. A fierce pride flamed high in his heart, and most of it was for the little man who crouched in the stern.

Sea water swished around the stretchers. The whaleboat picked up speed. Big Jim wanted to look over his shoulder, to see if he could make out the shattered bulk of the *Gold Coast*. He was too tired, too enslaved by his oar, to do even that.

He lost track of the time while the

waves and the wind buffeted his boat. He didn't know whether it was still raining or whether the water that fell was only spray from the wind-flattened whitecaps. Each time his oar feathered, the wind tried to wrest it from his grasp.

THE Old Man raised his voice in a shout even more mighty than before.

"Ahoy, *Gold Coast*! Ahoy, Horse Hurlburt! Stand by to heave us your line. How many men you got, Captain?"

The wind tore Hurlburt's words

and struck Big Jim's shoulder smartly. It was the line. The Old Man caught it and made it fast to the steering rowlock. Big Jim lifted his eyes toward the shore. Dim and distant, he saw the white blade of the engine's headlight. There was a small point of illumination nearer the water. Peewee Morris still stood on his rock. A black wave humped up between, cut off all sight of the mainland.

"I'll see you ashore, Horse," yelled the Old Man. "I wish I had you on this stroke oar, damn your eyes. I'd work the hell out of you!"

"And I'd give you the deep six, you

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into faint shreds. They sounded like:

"Twenty-six, you damned fool!"

"Back starboard!" the Old Man called.

Big Jim, blowing hard, reversed his oar and saw the faint loom of the tanker. She was on a steep fore-and-aft slant, listing so sharply to port that her men had to cling to her rail to keep their footing on her steel deck. He heard the thumping, jarring grind of hull plates on the rocks. When the flashlight beam pointed downward, he saw the iridescence of leaking oil on the water.

"Hold water!" ordered the Old Man. Something swished through the rain

damned little shrimp!" Horse Hurlburt shouted.

The men around Hurlburt raised a wind-blown cheer for the Navy.

"Give way together!" the Old Man bawled.

They had a water-whipped line astern to slow them going in, but now they had the combers pushing from behind. Brine stung the raw blisters in Big Jim's palms. The spray drove into his eyes and smarted like sweat. He saw a mountain of a wave tower up suddenly and slap the Old Man between the shoulders. The boat pitched and instantly swung around.

She was going over, driven by a

quartering sea. There was no stopping her. Somebody lost his oar and it shot adrift. The handle of it rammed hard against Big Jim's spine.

The next instant he was under, being rolled along helplessly in the smothering chill of the surf. He lashed out blindly, struggling for a footing. The boat lunged over his head. A row-lock slashed across his back and one shoulder.

He ducked his head and felt his hand stroke out and touch somebody's face. He caught the man's collar.

Then he found footing and the wave's fury was past. Choking and coughing, he fought his way up out of the sea. Peewee Morris was dashing into the surf, grabbing for the gunwale of the capsized boat.

Big Jim dragged his burden across the sand and let it fall. It was the Old Man. He lay with the murderous surf reaching hungrily for his feet. Big Jim hulked over him, panting.

"Get up!" he shouted anxiously. "Get up, Skipper!"

The others stumbled around in a dripping, shivering huddle. Peewee turned his flashlight on the Old Man. There was a bloody welt across the captain's forehead, but he opened his eyes. They blazed back at the flash.

"What the hell's going on?" he demanded. "Get that line hauled in. Lash it to the rail up there on the track. Signal Hurlburt to pay out the line for his breeches-buoy."

A straggle of curious passengers and train men cautiously clambered down to the beach. Somebody gathered driftwood and found a pile of creosote-soaked ties. A bonfire was blazing high when the first man came creaking over the frustrated anger of the frenzied sea. The dawn was gray over the train when the twenty-sixth man rode the pulley.

He was a massive, wide-shouldered man, as hugely built as Big Jim Kirby. He slapped the Old Man nearly into the sand, and then they hugged each other and danced around the bonfire.

The Old Man pulled Hurlburt around to face Big Jim Kirby.

"Horse," he boomed. "I want you to meet another real stroke. His name's Kirby. He's a lazy loafer—never knew what it was to fight, until tonight. Never knew what it was to pull his heart out, the way you pulled yours out by the roots on the old *Illinois*. When we won the Battenberg Cup. Remember?"

Hurlburt crushed the tender soreness of Kirby's hand.

"I remember," he said. "You were cox'n. Next week, you passed the entrance exams and went to the Academy. I went on the Outside and into the merchant service . . . Kirby, this skipper of yours is little, but he's a man. Don't you ever forget it!"

Big Jim swallowed hard. "I never will," he almost stammered.

So the Old Man had been a blue-jacket, and a cox'n in a whaleboat crew. He knew what it was to fight to win. And now there were twelve other men who also knew.

After some time the relief train rolled to the other side of the gap and the passengers went over. The Old Man telephoned at the next station. He came back to the car where Kirby and the others sat in their wrinkled blues, weary and sore.

"I could get the race postponed," he began. "Under the circumstances, we could at least have a runoff with the winner."

There was a concerted snort. It was Big Jim Kirby who answered angrily.

"Hell! I mean—beg your pardon, sir, but we can beat those crews without any postponement. That Battenberg Cup is just as good as ours. Only, we've got to have one understanding, sir. The cup won't be put in the crew's reception room, with the other trophies."

He looked around at the twelve other men, and at Horse Hurlburt. There was a smile softening the strained weariness of the merchant skipper's face as he nodded.

"The cup, sir, will be kept in your cabin. Is that agreed, Captain Dawes?"

THE crew decided one thing was needed, and that was a strap megaphone for Pee wee Morris. Even with this artificial aid, Pee wee's voice could hardly measure up to the bellowing of Shrimp Dawes. But, as it turned out, the Old Man hired a water taxi for his exclusive use. He paced the Battenberg Race from start to finish.

The *Austin's* whaleboat crew could hear him thundering across the lanes. They dug in. They put their hearts into it. At the halfway mark, the soreness had gone out of their muscles. They no longer noticed that their palms bled on the oar handles.

At the halfway mark, they were bow and bow with the *Colorado*. The

Nevada's boat was crowding them for second place. Behind were the *West Virginia*, *California* and *Lexington's* boats. Then another water taxi roared up and pushed rudely into the line of blue-packed motor sailers and tugs. Above the roar of cheers and the blare of bands, the *Austin's* crew heard Horse Hurlburt yelling them on.

"Step it up, there!" Pee wee shrielled. "Stroke, stroke!"

They crossed the finish line four lengths ahead, and fell over their oars.

Big Jim Kirby, unutterably weary and drenched with sweat, lay sprawled happily for a minute. Then he twisted astern and caught Pee wee by the legs. He tossed Pee wee, megaphone and all, over the side.

It had seemed to him the proper thing to do.

Next Month's Headliners

SIEGE OF SWORDS

A Novel of Men-at-Arms

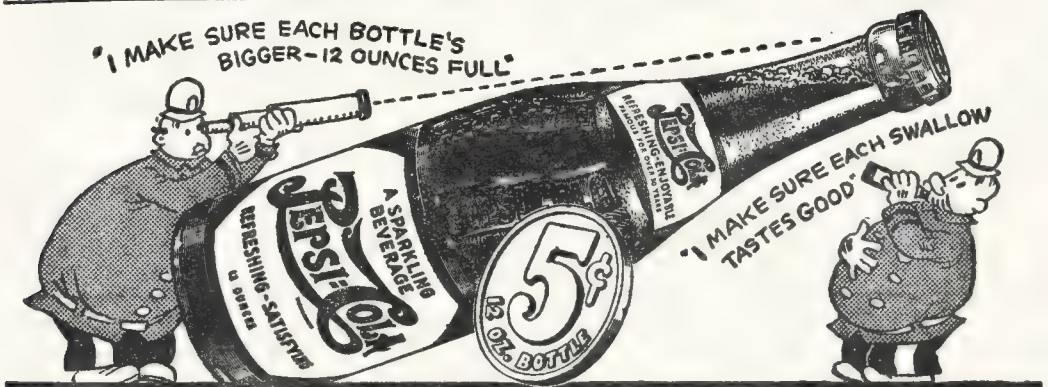
By MALCOLM WHEELER-NICHOLSON

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THE DEVIL'S STOWAWAY

By JOE ARCHIBALD

Author of "Death from Beyond," "One Drop of Blood," etc.

CHAPTER I

The Jades of Toi

CAPTAIN STROUD wished he were back on the deck of the *Samarang*, the three thousand-ton packet anchored off the rotten piling of the Port Moresby

waterfront. He wished he was anywhere but in the *ravi*, the big cannibal hut sprawled out on the bank of the dirty yellow New Guinea River.

Outside, there was the crawling jungle hell, an insidious silence creeping through its dank vegetation. It was a fearful land of black magic and

A NOVELET OF JUNGLE HORROR

*When a New Guinea Witch
Doctor Conspires With a
Sailor, Murderers Are Left
at Sea With Crawling Horror
in the Bowels of Their Ship!*



He wanted to get out of there—his
flesh was beginning to crawl

horrible mystery. Out in the savage compound, war drums throbbed. Black men walked around out there, their bodies covered with strange tattooing.

Huts out there were raised up on long poles for more than one reason. Protection against poisonous crawling creatures and enemies that slip in at night to lop off a head or two and get themselves a roast.

Out in the waters of the river, giant man-eaters lurked. Stroud had seen one on the way in, over thirty feet long.

The *ravi* was dimly lighted. War clubs, unstrung bows and spears were heaped against the walls. There were hundreds of grinning skulls heaped on the floor, a lot of them painted with garish colors. Not far from these a witch doctor sat, poking at the gory entrails of a flying fox, a vampire bat that had a face like a toy bulldog.

The fur and the insides of the flying fox told the witch doctor many things. The meat that had been on it—some of it, barely cooked—was inside of Stroud, and his stomach still rebelled. The chief would have been displeased if Stroud had refused the food. Stroud's head might soon have joined the others there on the floor.

The light of the low, flickering fire lit Bongalo's gruesome face in a horrible way. It bore the crimson tuft of the cannibal. The old black man was nearly naked and his fuzzy hair was gray. He watched Stroud with a Cyclopean eye and it burned like a hot coal imbedded deep in velvet. Bongalo had lost his other eye somewhere.

Bongalo held a leather sack in his hands and he talked in Motuan, the language spoken between blacks and whites in that spirit-ridden land.

"Worth very much money what Bongalo gives white friend. Bongalo think it very little to give for life of son. You go back to ship safe—black men, black on skin—hearts same color as white men's. Not so black mebbeso as white man's."

Stroud was pretty sure he knew

what that greasy leather sack contained. His heart thumped heavily with excitement. If his hunch was right, Captain Stroud would come close to buying a ship for himself. But the sounds out there tightened his scalp.

ONCE in awhile Bongalo's blacks would peer in through the entrance to the *ravi*. Wicked looking devils, with bamboo and hogs' tusks thrust through noses and ears. Meat eaters like Bongalo himself. A black in Papua does not become a chief until he spills more blood than anybody else.

Stroud felt strange, his head was swimming a little. He looked over at the witch doctor who wore a grim costume made of feathers and snake skins. He would poke at the remains of the flying fox for hours because he saw things there that no other man could see.

There was a more horrible object spread out on a kind of litter over there by the skulls. A black boy with no sign of life about him. But Bongalo had assured Stroud that he was very much alive. The witch doctor had cast a spell over him and it was fighting a fever that burned inside the black boy.

"It was nothing, Bongalo," Stroud said ingratiatingly. "I was pretty lucky. Didn't do much that time—"

Bongalo said nothing. He kept juggling the leather sack in his skinny black hands and looking at the skipper of the *Samarang*. Stroud wished he could read the chief's mind. Perhaps, when Bongalo had handed him the bag, he would consider his debt closed to the white man. For would not the reward have been in Stroud's hands for a few moments? In his possession? After that, Bongalo would perhaps take them away from a headless visitor to his *ravi*. Bongalo's history had been bloody and unscrupulous.

Stroud felt as if there was some-

thing inside of him that did not belong there. It was not the meat he had eaten. Something that went deeper into his innermost being than mere food. He wanted to get out of there. His flesh was beginning to crawl. Out there, the drums boomed and throbbed. They never stopped. It was twenty-one miles back to Moresby. He wondered if the big Finn, Borgh, and the cockney, Sniffer Skene, were still down there by the flat-bottomed outboard boat, waiting for him.

"Here, white friend," Bongalo said. He tossed Stroud the leather sack. "Jade! Half of the Jades of Toi, my friend."

Stroud caught the leather sack in his avid fingers. The witch doctor drew his gaze before he bothered to pull the leather strings and look inside. The hideous soothsayer spoke in a strange voice.

"The white man go. Kilanghi go with him—in spirit—watch out for him. White man can die—he do not die in New Guinea."

Captain Stroud got to his feet and his head felt light. His movements were strange, mechanical.

Terror seized Captain Stroud and he was no timid man. Ten years before the mast had whipped him into one hundred and eighty pounds of human energy. Timid men have more chance than the brave in New Guinea for cannibals eat none but the brave. The face under Stroud's visored cap looked as if it might have been hewn from solid oak. Its jaws were hard and lean.

CAPTAIN STROUD looked at the black boy who lay stiff and stark on his pallet and he shuddered visibly. He told himself that this witch doctor might have discovered secrets thought to be jealously guarded in India. Suspended animation perhaps—a sort of spell—mysticism whatever it was. In Papua they called it *Ju-Ju* or *Puri-Puri* or straight black magic.

Captain Stroud did not want to wait to find out. The witch doctor went

over and began poking into the remains of the flying fox. Bongalo sat in his place. The lid of that one burning eye was getting heavy with sleep. Bongalo had eaten a great deal of dog meat and flying fox and had washed it down with evil tasting *gamada*. Stroud's thigh muscles seemed to pull a little as he walked out of the ravi. He felt the presence of the strange invisible sinister force that had become a part of him more strongly than ever.

"Good heavens," Stroud said when he got out into the open air, "there's the devil around here somewhere. I feel—maybe it's that loathsome meat gnawing at my stomach."

He took a deep breath when he saw Borgh and Skene waiting for him down there by the edge of the croc-infested river. Blacks swarmed about Stroud as he started walking swiftly, mechanically, a strange lightness to his step. The place was akin to hell, all right. Those drums never stopped. There were other sounds that were there but could not be heard. That was the way it felt to Stroud.

Six years before, Stroud had come to Port Moresby as the skipper of a tramp steamer out of Liverpool. Near a low dive on the waterfront, Stroud had saved a black man from a knife wielded by a drunken Dutchman. The native had been on his knees with the wicked weapon ready to be plunged deep into his throat when Stroud had crashed his fist against the side of the Dutchman's head.

Stroud left the Guinea port the next morning and forgot about the incident. Not until he arrived at Port Moresby on the *Samarang*, years later, did he learn from the British officials that a cannibal chief named Bongalo had been waiting for the ship captain to come back.

"Captain George Stroud is it?" the British official had said. "Well, Bongalo said you would come back. Wants to see you, Stroud. The man you saved from a butchering six years ago was his son. The old devil could make

you rich. If he's got the stuff we think he's got."

When Stroud reached the boat he had the leather sack tied carefully around his neck. Borgh, the Finn, grinned mirthlessly.

"We figgered ya was a goner, didn't we, Sniffer?" he said.

Borgh was a giant of a man with a flat pockmarked expressionless face. He had little porcine beady eyes that glittered and belied his stupidity. Heavy lids screened those eyes. He had a pair of hands that could crack a coconut as if it were simply an ostrich egg.

The cockney with him was the hatchet-faced first mate. His long thin twitching nose was the biggest part of his face. Sniffer Skene eyed Stroud and bared his teeth.

"Abaht time. Let's shove off, skipper, 'fore we lose our blinkin' 'eads. I don't trust them black blighters, I don't."

He swung around slowly and laid a rifle in the bottom of the boat.

"What did the chief give ya, Mister Stroud?" Borgh asked insolently.

CHAPTER II

A Story of Utter Horror



THE skipper of the *Samarang* shivered as he got aboard the flat-bottomed boat. A croc tumbled off the bank not far away and made a loud splattering sound. The motor started its clattering roar but it did not

stretch thin that nerve-strumming boom of jungle drums. The cries of strange night birds and animals seeped out of the rank vegetation lining the banks of the river and they seemed charged with a timber of dread expectancy.

The boat slid out into the middle of the muddy river and Stroud could see

the small dark blotches on the stream's surface were the sinister heads of the reptiles showing above the surface. They were waiting—always waiting.

Borgh and Sniffer said nothing. They seemed to be thinking. After awhile, the Finn's voice boomed through the oppressive stillness of the benighted land.

"I heard a story back in Port Moresby, Mister Stroud, in one of them dives. Stories get around this island. This Bongalo got his job of head man because he slaughtered the skipper and crew of a tub out of Singapore. Seems the skipper was a salty bucko himself, Captain Gore. Ever hear of him? Who hasn't, Mister Stroud? Bongalo caught 'em dead to rights with his war canoes one night. Captain Gore it was that cut the chink mandarin's throat in Saigon an' stole the jade—the Jades of Toi. Worth a hundred thousand if they were worth a penny. Now, if a feller like yerself got even a smell of 'em—say for a reward fer . . ."

"A lot of those stories are crazy," Stroud said hollowly. "This is a crazy land."

He did not like the look in Borgh's half-closed eyes. Skene made that nerve-grating sniffing sound and his ratty face looked mostly bone in the moonlight. Stroud wondered how far he could trust Borgh and Skene, and the rest of the crew back there on the *Samarang*. Stroud had had to take his pick of the scum of the 'Frisco waterfront just after he had signed on as skipper of the packet.

In snug harbors, old seadogs spoke sourly of the *Samarang*. Men bearing master's tickets had wanted none of it. There had been bloodstains above and below decks that all the pain could not hide from those who knew they were there. The old tub was haunted and its log was shot through with tales of violent death.

"Like the stories you hear about the *Samarang*," Stroud went on after a numbing silence.

"Yeah. Tough luck for skippers, that old tub," Borgh grinned. "Three of 'em that signed on never got back to port, Mister Stroud!"

The boat barely crawled through the water. It was bundled in a terrible blanket of silence that seemed charged with that low humming sound one hears long after a harp string has been picked. Stroud grinned icily. He had a certain amount of superstition in him. All seafaring men have. Desperation had sent him aboard the *Samarang*.

The ship had not always carried that name. Once it had been known as the *African Lady*. The new owners had seen to that. They had tried to get the stench of copra and guano out of its holds, had put in a new foremast.

STROUD preferred sailing on any kind of ship rather than go to rot in the cramped hall room of a back street rooming house. He had no other choice under the circumstances. He had found the owners a little mysterious, too, unduly exacting. They had plied him with questions for hours before they had given him the berth, had come to an understanding with him. Stroud had walked out of the offices back in 'Frisco with a strange secret locked up inside his head and with a conscience that adversity and desperation had rendered a trifle elastic.

Stroud had known that he would have to take two or three of the crew into his confidence before the ship got to Saigon or the secret would be of little value to anyone. But when the *Samarang* had dropped anchor off Port Moresby, Stroud had not as yet found anyone he dared trust too far. He had taken Borgh and Skene to Bongalo's village because he knew they were afraid of neither man nor devil.

Borgh's silky voice cut the silence again.

"All them stories you hear in Port Moresby ain't lies, Mister Stroud. Me an' Sniffer risked our heads comin' up

this river with ya. We oughter git part of what yuh got, Mister Stroud."

Stroud caught the veiled threat in Borgh's voice. He set his jaws hard and took a pipe from his pocket. He packed tobacco in it and then touched a match to the weed. The smoke drifted toward the stern and trickled into Borgh's wide nostrils. Stroud's nerves sang. Little warning whispers came out of the dread stillness.

"You lie, Mister Stroud!" Borgh said suddenly. "Bongalo give ya somethin'!"

Sniffer Skene laughed. "'E did, y'know, skipper! We aim t' 'ave our share."

Stroud laughed thinly. "I see—yeah, I see."

He wanted to say something else. "Don't try and kill me—you can't," he wanted to say. "The spirits won't let you." But he knew that was crazy.

He let out a strangled cry when he saw the cockney move with lightning swiftness. He struck for his gun but a belaying pin smashed against his chest and drove breath out of his lungs. Borgh's laugh broke and ran through the gloom.

Stroud tried to get off the seat but his efforts were fruitless. The giant Finn had scrambled over the cockney's crouching frame and his hands were reaching for Stroud's throat. The fingers dug into the flesh of the skipper's throat and put on terrific pressure. From a long distance away Stroud heard Sniffer Skene's voice.

"Watch it, Borgh. 'Alf a mo'! Don't tip us over—the crocs—"

Stroud's strength oozed out of him as Borgh's grip tightened. Strange, going so fast. He had been a strong, powerful man.

He felt the fingers on his throat loosen. Something struck him hard in the chest and he went over the side of the boat—into the crocodile-infested river. His last conscious thought was of a horrible looking witch doctor poking at the entrails of a flying fox. The last sound he heard was a burst of

cackling crazy laughter. It seemed to be inside his head.

Borgh, the Finn, picked up a rifle and squatted down in the boat. Sniffer Skene's angular face lost what little healthy color it had when he stared at the monsters that began churning the water to foam. The horribly white belly of a giant croc flashed in the dim lunar glow. A dozen of the man-eaters battled for possession of the prize Borgh had thrown them. Borgh was laughing.

"Got him Sniffer! That big one pulled him under. We won't never worry about Stroud no more. I got what the black devil give him, Skene. Yeah, look out there—no sign of Stroud. Two hundred yards to the bank it is. Them crocs drown 'em first, Sniffer."

THE boat chug-chugged toward the delta. Borgh sat facing the cockney, his big hands fumbling at the strings of the leather sack. The Finn opened it and poured green gems into the hollow of the big hand that had caught at Stroud's throat.

"Jade, Sniffer! Plenty of it!"

Sniffer Skene's eyes glowed with an unholy light.

"Gor blimie, Borgh. The real stuff!"

"Right, Sniffer," Borgh said and his evil brain was feeling the bite of madness. "Thousands here, Sniffer, yeah."

"What'll we say in Moresby, Borgh? 'Abaht the skipper?" the cockney asked in a husky voice. "They'll be arskin' questions, they will."

"Yeah—they will, won't they?" The Finn smiled bleakly. "Ya was firs' mate, wa'n't ya, Sniffer? In command now, huh?"

Borgh eased the flat-bottomed boat a little toward shore, watched for signs of crocodiles. The Finn was laughing but Sniffer saw no trace of mirth on the pitted flat face.

Borgh knew that there would have to be an explanation in Port Moresby. He was laughing inwardly because Sniffer Skene did not know he had

only a few seconds to live. Borgh's brain had begun its evil machinations the moment he had taken the leather sack from around Stroud's neck. Borgh would take command of the *Samarang*.

Ghost ship! The Finn laughed at that superstition, too.

The cockney was dreaming of pubs back in Soho. He felt the touch of soft lips against his own. He heard the sound of women's laughter. He saw himself a prince in the slums of London. Then his dreams dissolved like a water bubble bursting. Stark reality struck hard against his slimy soul and the smell of the jungle crept into his twitching nose. He saw that the boat was in too close. "Watch it, matey!" he warned the Finn. "'Ead 'er off, Borgh, or we'll blinkin' well be run aground on a croc's back or git ourselves 'ung by them snaky vines. Yer—Borgh—what yer grinnin' at? What yer lookin' at me like that fer, Borgh? Yer look balmy—plumb daft. Don't Borgh! N-No-o-o-o, don't do that! We'll go overboard! Bo-o-o-o-orgh fer the luvva . . ."

Stark terror seized Sniffer Skene and stretched his voice thin. He could not swim a stroke. Crocodiles were thick there. He saw the bumpy eyes of one of them just as Borgh tipped the boat over. The cockney's scream trailed off into the jungle and died there amid the steady throbbing of native drums.

Borgh started swimming, the leather sack of jade dangling from his teeth. There was only twenty yards of stinking water between himself and the bank. Crocodiles were not thick there. Borgh had been watching for that kind of sport.

He heard a great splashing in the water behind him and the giant Finn laughed deep within him for he knew Skene was doomed.

A decoy for the man-eaters! Borgh laughed again. The crocs would not get him—why should they? He had given them a banquet. They ought to

know that. The Finn swam with powerful strokes and he pulled himself out of the river just as a giant reptile tumbled off the bank.

Gasping for breath, Borgh looked out over the water and saw nothing of Sniffer.

He laughed jerkily when he saw three dark blobs appear above the surface of the river.

The Finn tied the leather sack around his beefy neck. One of the crocodiles, he mused, had already dragged the cockney to its subterranean icebox to let him ripen there. The scaly devils liked their meat gamey—fully ripe.

They were not always ravenous. Plenty of dead men floated down the rivers of Guinea.

But white meat—Borgh grinned like a gargoyle.

"Yeah, Stroud and Sniffer oughter be choice dishes tuh them devils."

IN THE mysterious interior, the drums boomed steadily, muffled the heavy pounding of the Finn's black heart. They gave him a grim warning. The drums told the Finn that evil spirits walked abroad. They beat because it drove the evil things away.

A black in New Guinea has a soul. It is regulated by a sorcerer. The man does not die until the witch doctor decrees he die. Then he goes out in a hurry and the drums thump the devils away from him. But the Finn did not understand these things. He laughed at them.

Borgh stood there figuring out his next move. His story was well fixed in his mind. A giant croc had upset the boat and Stroud and Sniffer had been the two unlucky ones. It could not be more than five miles along the shore to Kerema. Borgh would make it in spite of the crawling and flying things infesting the jungle. He would stumble into the office of the magistrate at Kerema and tell the official a story of utter horror.

CHAPTER III

Mocking Demons



BORGH started fighting his way through the jungle. Vampire bats swirled around him and beat against his face. They clung to his legs and arms and held on and he fought them off. Mosquitoes formed a veritable cloud around him and, underfoot, there were snakes and voracious ants.

Once, he stopped and knelt down. He pulled two leeches off his leg that were beginning to drain some of the strength out of him. Borgh's progress was painfully slow, but he kept laughing. Insects gorged upon his flesh and blood. He slipped on a slimy squirming thing, kicked at it with his boot.

Borgh pushed on. He started mumbling to himself, told himself that he had risked his own life, had a good chance to lose it, for the reward that stuffed out that leather sack. Pushing through the wild New Guinea jungle is a trip through hell.

Borgh paused at intervals to get his breath and pull stinging, crawling things out of the flesh of his arms and legs. Borgh told the devil to show his face and to look upon a man who was not afraid of him. Only a man like Borgh could have made it to Kerema. . . .

* * * * *

Borgh, his flat face bearing the blotches of a hundred insect bites, stood on the deck of the *Samarang* and eyed a sullen group of men. Fear was written on the faces of most of them. Borgh had been cleared at Kerema and Port Moresby.

Along the waterfront, there was regret for Stroud's passing. In the drinking places, they spoke of the ill-luck that hung over the *Samarang*.

"I'm in command of this packet un-

til we get to Saigon," Borgh said. "There'll be word from the owners waitin' there. I'll step off this tub with a whole skin."

He singled out a husky red-haired man. "Battuse, you're takin' Skene's berth. First mate."

"If it's all the same to you, Borgh, I prefer to stay as I am. I want none of this tub. I was a fool not to skip with Allison and . . ."

"Mister Borgh to you, you yellow dog!" The Finn's eyes were getting muddy and his huge fists were balled at his sides. "So some of 'em deserted, did they? Lost their guts!"

"This lousy ship is haunted," Battuse said. "We lost the starboard anchor in Sydney, Mister Borgh. Fifty fathoms of chain unshippin' its pin for no reason at all. Sparks was buried at sea—got pneumonia. Stroud's gone, an' so's Skene. Maybe you could tell us, Borgh, why they . . ."

The Finn went berserk. He lunged at Battuse and hammered him to the deck and, with the man writhing on the plates, he kicked in his ribs with his heavy boot. Borgh whirled on the tight group of men and broke them apart with a terrible sweep of his eyes.

"I'll show you scum! We're weighin' anchor as soon as that lighter brings the last of the cargo. I'll run this ship back to 'Frisco, if I have to use your yellow carcasses to get up steam. You'll take my orders."

He laughed and stabbed a finger at a loose-jointed, scar-faced man who was grinning crookedly.

"Monkey-face—you, Gratz—you're my first mate," Borgh roared. "You give the orders and if they don't hop to them, I'll fill them with lead! Mutiny—I'll be within my rights, Monkey-face, won't I?"

Gratz laughed. "Yeah, Mister Borgh. You will. Me an' a couple of my pals will stick by you, Mister Borgh."

The giant Finn stormed fore and aft, bellowing orders. The port anchor came up when the last of the cargo

was loaded into the hold of the *Samarang*. Rubber scraps, copra and bales of sisal. The sky was coppery when the ship's engines began throbbing. A leprous glow broomed the harbor of Port Morseby.

FROM the interior, came the throb of native drums. The *Samarang* swung around slowly and headed out for the open sea.

Just forty-eight hours had elapsed since Stroud and Sniffer Skene had been thrown to the crocodiles. On the waterfront, a group of blacks watched the *Samarang* until it had become but a small blotch on the horizon. One of the Namaus with a big boar's tusk thrust through his nose, seemed to be grinning. Perhaps it was the way the light of the dying sun played on his twisted features, for it is said that a native of New Guinea never laughs without good reason.

Eleven hours out, Borgh stood on the forecastle deck, a cold smirk frozen on his pocked face. He had the crew where he wanted them. He had picked out those whom he could depend upon. He had combed the *Samarang* for weapons and had taken an assortment of knives and guns to his cabin.

Borgh touched a bulge at his chest with his big beefy fingers and his little eyes shone brightly. Fifty thousand dollars worth of jade. Borgh would be through with the sea when he got back to 'Frisco. He would find an easy market for the precious stones there. He had contemplated jumping the *Samarang* at Saigon but had thought better of it. The police of six nations were on the lookout for that jade. A mandarin in Bombay had been murdered for those green stones. They belonged to his heirs.

A stiff wind struck the bow of the *Samarang* when it slipped out of Torres Strait and into the Arafura Sea. The ship plowed along sluggishly, making little more than ten knots. Borgh began cursing and went below.

He railed at the chief in the engine room and threatened to break his skull. "The fire-boxes are roaring, Mister Borgh," the man said. "This old tub won't never do more than ten knots with that new steel foremast they put in it. Too heavy for this packet, sir. What them builders was thinkin' of—" He shook his head.

Borgh swore and went to his quarters. They were aft and clear across the stern. Going along the passageway, the Finn stopped and sniffed at the humid air. His piggish eyes dilated a trifle and a strange prickly feeling ran along his scalp. He heard a groan somewhere behind him and he turned and looked toward the companionway leading above. A man was getting to his feet. It was Monkey-face.

"You, Gratz!" Borgh roared. "What happened?"

He walked down the passageway and lifted Gratz to his feet. Monkey-face looked sick with terror. "Somethin' hit me, Mister Borgh," he said. "I—I don't know." Monkey-face got down on his hands and knees and his fingers began groping. "My knife fell out of its sheath, around here."

Borgh's throat became dry. That strange familiar smell bit into his nostrils again. Tobacco smoke. Only one man had smoked weed that had smelled like that! The Finn cursed himself when a sudden feeling of apprehension wormed into his black heart. He turned and lumbered toward his quarters, a big hand drawing a gun out of a holster slung from his shoulder.

Borgh went into the cabin and sat down. The smell in his big flat nose got thicker. At his elbow was a massive piece of ship chandlery, the surface of which was littered by books and papers and an assortment of gim-cracks that had belonged to Captain Stroud.

Borgh's arms came in contact with an old blackened briar pipe. The Finn drew the arm away as if a red spider

had bitten it. Fear gripped him then and his lower jaw hung down. He seemed frozen in his chair.

BORGH picked up the big curve-stemmed pipe, one he had seen more than once in Stroud's teeth. It was warm. It slipped from Borgh's fingers and clattered to the deck. Ash sprayed the boards and small particles of the dottle showed blood red. The Finn swore and started to sweat. He got unsteadily to his feet and walked toward the door. He needed gulps of cool clean air to wash the terror out of his insides.

Near the door he slipped back a step. His eyes stared at something on the floor. Borgh got down on one knee and poked at a chunk of muddy slime with a finger that shook. The stuff stank. Not many hours before he had wiped that kind of stuff off his boots—just before he staggered into the office of the magistrate at Kerema. Slime from the river that bit its way deep into the crawling jungle where man-eaters lived. Borgh's evil mind tried to fight against the terror that shook his bones and the flesh that covered them.

The Finn knew he had clean boots when he had come aboard. He felt smothered. Stroud's pipe, warm! Stroud was dead. Ghosts did not smoke pipes. But—Borgh got to his feet and reached for a stanchion to support his heavy bulk. He stumbled across the room and took a bottle from a locker.

Borgh poured fiery liquor down his throat until his nerves began to stop singing. The false courage began to have its way with him. He went out of there and pounded his way to the deck. Wind drove against his face. Spray came off the superstructure and beat against his pocked face.

He started toward the bridge and shouldered a man aside who got in his way. Borgh cursed when he saw Monkey-face's white wet face. He lunged for the man and shook him.

"You tryin' to scare Borgh, hah? You been in my cabin, you scum, smokin' Stroud's pipe, wa'n't you?" Borgh banged Monkey-face across the mouth with the back of his hand. "You been pryin' around, Gratz, listening outside my quarters."

The Finn took his gun out of its holster and leveled it at the man he had made first mate. Monkey-face squealed his terror. Borgh did not shoot. "If I see you near my cabin again, Monkey-face," he said, "I'll tear your heart out!"

Borgh went on toward the bridge with the wind whining around him. Monkey-face leaned against a bulkhead, his loose lips quivering. "He's goin' mad, Borgh is."

The Finn went up on the bridge and the man at the wheel eyed him queerly. Borgh's pocked face was ghastly in the dim light. Borgh's head swung around slowly to look back into the ship's wake.

The wind shrieked and moaned and blasted against the packet as if it were trying to loosen its rusty plates. Spume burst high from the bows and came splashing back over the foredeck. The seas heaved and pounded against the *Samarang's* sides. There seemed to be little demons riding the gale—little demons that mocked Borgh on the bridge. Perhaps they knew of a secret that Stroud had taken away with him. Something the Finn did not know.

CHAPTER IV

The Knocking at the Door



NIGHT deepened and the sea became more angry. Borgh stared into the wastes ahead.

The liquor inside of him had lost most of its potency and a crawling terror was oozing out of his pores again.

Stories of that land that was drop-

ping farther and farther astern whirled in his brain—black magic of Guinea, devil worship, *Ju-Ju* and voodooism, witchcraft that gets into a man's soul and takes deep root there. Evil forces following the *Samarang*. Borgh felt a sinister presence. He began cursing into the wind and the man at the wheel stared at the skipper with bulging eyes.

"Haunted is it? I'll bring this stinking rotten tub into Saigon!" the Finn roared and shook his fists at the elements. "Borgh'll be on the bridge when it reaches the pier in 'Frisco. Ghosts? They'd better be able to stop hot lead—blast 'em! Come on ya chain-clankin' buckos!"

He reeled when the boat gave a mighty lurch. He caught the bridge rail and hung on, still cursing. Borgh forgot his fear while he cursed. Up ahead there, two thousand more miles of water before the harbor lights of Saigon would appear. Days and nights on the hell ship—with what? Borgh left the bridge and groped his way below.

Morning. The *Samarang* plowed through white-capped seas under a dull coffee-colored sky. Borgh tumbled out of his bunk after a sleepless night. His eyes were swollen and his big hands trembled. All that night Borgh had dreamed of dead men. Sniffer Skene came to him and stood beside his bed. He pointed cold white fingers at him. From Sniffer's finger had hung a string of water weed. His clothes were fouled with the slimy stuff and his eyes were cold and dead. Borgh asked himself why Stroud had not come back, too.

He pulled on his clothes, took a stiff drink and then went out of his cabin to go to the officer's mess. The chief engineer and Monkey-face were at the table when Borgh lurched into the cramped mess cabin. Monkey-face's eyes were sunken deep into his head. Borgh growled at them and sat down. The second mate came in and his face was gray.

"Seasick, you landlubber?" The Finn roared at the man.

"Seasick, Mister Borgh? Ha-ha-a-a-a-aha! You ever see a dead man walkin'? It makes your insides do worse things than seasickness. It shrivels them up for awhile an' puts slush in your veins. I saw him, las' night. I was comin' out of the fo'c'sle, at the end of the passage—Stroud!" His voice trailed off in a whisper.

"Y-ya was drunk, blast ya!" the Finn gasped out. "I saw the skipper git caught by th-that croc. He never come up."

"It was Stroud. His eyes looked right through me. His clothes were wet an' slimy. I could smell him, Borgh. I couldn't move. I heard him laugh and it wa'n't the wind. I put my hands up over my eyes, then I looked ag'in—he was gone. I went down where he was standin'—a pool of dirty water. I'm goin' t'git off this hell ship!"

Then Monkey-face spoke and his voice shook in his throat.

"The man on watch last night—in the crow's nest, Mister B-Borgh. He heard voices up there. S-somethin' on this packet—the thing that struck me last night. I . . ."

Borgh picked up a mug of black coffee and hurled it against the bulkhead. He kicked his chair back and bared his yellow teeth.

"Something on this tub—yah! Some stowaway, that's it. Tryin' to get Borgh's . . ." He snapped his teeth shut and his porcine eyes became wary.

A little scrawny mess man backed against the bulkhead forced words through his lips.

"The cook, Wu Ling, says as how somebody stole grub from the g-galley, Mister Borgh. Canned beef and peaches and crackers—last night. The Chink looked like a ghost this mornin'. There was mud, he said, on the floor. Mister B-Borgh, where is there mud on board a packet like this—wet mud?"

THE Finn swore and the oath came out of his dry throat with a thin whistling sound. He swung away from there and went out into the passageway. He went into the galley and he saw the cook sitting on a stool, his Oriental features pale under its yellow pigment. He pointed at something on the floor without moving his thick lips.

Borgh looked at it, his blood getting stagnant in his veins. Terror caught him in a trembling grasp. The Finn went out and sent his harsh voice booming through the bowels of the *Samarang*. He got Monkey-face coming out of the forecastle and he caught him in a fierce grip.

"Turn them out, every manjack of 'em!" Borgh roared. "We'll scrape the inside of this tub from stem to stern. If there's anybody hiding we'll find him. I'll rip his insides out!"

The crew of the *Samarang* gave the packet a combing with Borgh driving them from stem to stern, from keel to superstructure. The cargo in the hold was shifted about. Every locker, every chest aboard the *Samarang* was searched, until even a rat could not have evaded the Finn's prying, fear-ridden eyes.

In the forecastle, Borgh went berserk.

"I'm warnin' you skunks, somebody is playin' tricks with Borgh, hah? I'll string him to a yardarm by his thumbs."

He stood there, his massive bulk swaying forward, his arms spread wide, his fingers hooked. His breathing sawed through the forecastle and it was labored and unsteady. Men saw terror in Borgh's eyes. Their own fear fed from it. A sullen mumbling sound came from the small group. One blurted it out.

"We're gettin' off this hell ship the firs' chance. . . ."

The Finn leaped forward and almost tore the rebellious man's head off with a murderous right fist.

"Yah? Not alive you leave this

packet—t'ween here an' Saigon. I'm in command. I—Borgh. He don't believe in ghosts. No—no, not Borgh."

He went out of the forecastle, massive limbs quaking.

All that day, the *Samarang*, with Borgh driving the crew mercilessly, rolled sluggishly through the heavy seas. The men on deck dreaded the coming of night. They watched the red glow in the leaden skies that marked the position of the rapidly sinking sun. Fright was stamped on their grim faces. Below decks, a small group huddled together and spoke in whispers. They watched out for Monkey-face and the scum that cottoned to him. The *Samarang* creaked and groaned and seemed to bury its bow deeper into the foaming wastes. Its speed was not more than ten knots.

In the black of night, Borgh went to his cabin and threw himself down on his bunk. There were queer sounds in the Finn's ears. The sniffing of the cockney, weird laughing that seemed to come from the bowels of the ship and brush against his door. Ghosts walking. Borgh, his senses reeling from strong grog, closed his big fingers around the leather sack that dangled from his neck. He started breathing heavily. Sleep came over him. Outside the port, the wind began its insane howling again. The *Samarang* kept lurching and bucking and rolling.

Borgh was startled out of his sleep. He heard it—a knocking at the door. He dug big fists into his red-rimmed eyes and swung out of the bunk.

"Who's there?" he roared huskily.

There was no answer. Borgh thought he had been hearing things and he began cursing.

Then it came again. He called out again, his voice shaking with rage. Still that ominous silence gripped the passageway outside. The Finn picked up his gun and staggered across the cabin. He swung the door open and saw nothing.

The Finn felt a terrible fear rush

through him. From somewhere came an eerie laugh. Borgh tore profane words from his throat and stumbled along the passageway. He went up the companionway to the deck and his heavy hand reached out for the first man he saw. The second mate.

"Did you knock at my door? Tryin' to scare Borgh, hah? You turned an' ran when I opened the door. I'll smash your skull!"

"I don't know what you're talkin' about, Mister Borgh. I—I ain't left the watch. I . . ."

BORGH knocked the second mate down and lumbered forward. His piggy eyes were wild. He got to the ladder leading to the forecastle deck and started to climb it. Something struck the iron plates close to his head, caromed off and hit him in the shoulder. Borgh pounced upon the thing when it clattered to the deck.

He picked it up and stared at it. It was a wicked looking knife with a carved wooden handle and a blade six inches long. In the dim light, Borgh read a name that had been cut into the handle—Gratz.

The Finn turned and walked aft, his rage wringing low animal-cries from his throat. He found Monkey-face on the bridge and he reached out and pulled him toward him.

"Y-you tried to kill Borgh, hah, Monkey-face? With this knife. In the dark, in the back, you dirty leech. Mutiny, Monkey-face. Murder! You want the knife back, yes? You will git it, Monkey-face, in the—"

Gratz read his doom in Borgh's muddy blood-flecked eyes.

"N-no," he shrieked. "I lost the knife when I was hit by—I didn't find it Borgh—No-o-o-o-o."

The blade struck Monkey-face in the throat and his blood streamed out. The man at the wheel choked with horror. The Finn picked up the dead man, hurled him off the bridge and roared through the drive of the wind.

"Overside with him," he bellowed.

"I'll teach these scum to try an' kill Borgh!"

The *Samarang* drove on through the heavy seas. In its wake was the blood of Monkey-face Gratz. Borgh was in his cabin drinking and cursing and fighting a gnawing fear when the news of the killing reached the fore-castle, the engine room. The men there talked again and they drew on their clothes. One of them went out to listen close to the skipper's cabin.

"Help me out of here," said Battuse, lying in his bunk. "Mates—I'm goin' with ya. I'm . . ."

The Finn knew nothing about it until three hours later. The second mate, blood streaming from a cut on his head, was pounding on his door. He lumbered across the cabin and swung it open.

"You swine," Borgh roared, "you wake up the captain at this hour! I'll break your thick skull!"

"They've gone, sir—seven of them in one of the boats. I tried to hold 'em off, Mister Borgh—they were crazy men. My best friend, he hit me with that pin. They didn't know what they were doin', Borgh—"

The Finn went stark raving mad. He went up on deck with an axe. He smashed a hole in the bottom of the remaining long boat and hurled the axe against a bulkhead.

"Yah, now le's see the others get off this tub—alive! Blast their yellow . . ."

The Finn broke off his tirade. He saw the wounded second mate staring at him, but the man's eyes were not on his face. Borgh involuntarily clamped a trembling hand to the leather sack that hung from his neck. His heavy woolen shirt was open. He had forgotten.

"So! You tried to hold 'em back, did ya? Ha-a-ah! You would have gone, too, but you wanted something Borgh has—you know, maybe. You been sneakin' around the cabin."

"No, Mister Borgh, I ain't. I don't know what you're sayin'. I . . ."

"We'll see, we'll see!" The Finn's voice increased its crazy pitch. "Turn the scum out that's left to take over the watches! Turn 'em out! I'll get this tub through to Saigon. I'll bring it in alone—yah!"

He whirled and lumbered to the ladder that led below. He went down it and walked along the passageway, his breathing vying with the throb of the *Samarang's* old engines.

Borgh stopped suddenly and his scalp tightened. A laugh struck against the rising short hairs of his powerful neck. He drew his gun, whirled and fired four shots down the dimly lighted passage. He lurched forward, swearing insanely. There was nothing there in the passage. He went into the afterhold, stood there bathed in the sweat of a horror that was getting too strong to fight against.

BORGH went to his cabin and locked himself in. He felt like an animal caught in a blind alley. He smelled that tobacco smoke again. Stroud's tobacco smoke.

Borgh thought desperately. Something was closing in on him relentlessly—something he could not see.

The evil things of Guinea, could they follow a man to the ends of the earth? The *Ju-Ju* of the dread cannibal jungles? Ghosts, they had said in every far-flung port, never left the *Samarang*. Borgh started laughing.

"I—I'll get away—go overside. I'll lick this—" His flesh crawled.

His sluggish fear-wracked brain whispered to him mockingly—Borgh, you smashed that last long-boat, didn't you, Borgh? Only six men and a Chinese cook left on the *Samarang*, Mister Borgh! Three skippers died on this packet—no, four. I forgot Stroud. You can't, though, Borgh! He walks the boat with the slime of the river dropping from his stinking clothes. He still likes his pipe, Borgh! I guess a ghost can smoke a pipe. Maybe Sniffer is with him, maybe not. Sniffer would go down to hell,

wouldn't he, Mister Borgh? That's why Sniffer was not with Stroud the night you had the dream?

The Finn banged the heels of his powerful hands against his temples to silence those horrible whisperings. He took a drink and then rolled into his bunk, his hands holding the leather sack tight. Stupor, rather than healthy sleep fogged his brain and he began to breathe with a weird, rasping sound.

A terrible quiet gripped the *Samarang*. Two hours before dawn, there came a knocking at the door of the cabin. Borgh stirred. Louder the knocking came—in measured beats. *Thump-thump-thump!* Borgh sat up and laughed horribly. He had had a dream. It had showed him a way out.

There were ships not far away. He would set the *Samarang* on fire, in the hold where the fire would burn slowly. The tub would stay afloat for a few hours.

Then he became aware of that steady measured pounding against his door.

CHAPTER V

Element of Chance



PICKING up his gun, the Finn bared his yellow fangs. Spine crawling, he got up and lumbered unsteadily across the cabin. He turned the key in the lock and swung the door open.

Then he screamed with terror and his massive legs nearly collapsed under him. The thought of the fortune dangling from his bull neck was all that held him erect.

Out there in the passage stood a terrible figure. Its clothes were soaked and gave off a horrible stench. Slime hung from the dead hands. The eyes of the night prowler burned with a ghostly light and they seemed to have sunken far back into his head. It was

Stroud—Captain Stroud—his ghost!

"Hello Borgh."

"N-no—y-you're dead, Stroud!"

The Finn's mind snapped. Horror made his voice liquid and his thick lips quivered like jelly. Borgh desperately whipped up his heavy gun and fired, but no explosions broke and thundered down the darkened passageway. The ghostly figure laughed quietly.

"I unloaded that thing, Mister Borgh—a little while ago. I came for my pipe— While you were up there cutting Monkey-face's throat. You'll hang, Borgh. There'll be something around that neck of yours besides that bag of jade."

Stroud moved forward and the giant Finn, sick with terror, gave way before him. Borgh slipped and fell. He got to his feet and backed away. He huddled near his bunk, big hands stretched out as if to hold the ghost at bay.

"I'm not a ghost, Borgh," Stroud said. He turned the key in the lock of the door. "That knife of Gratz'. I got it the night I knocked him out. Had to. Didn't want him to see me, Borgh." Stroud laughed acidly. "Something you didn't know about the *Samarang*, you dirty black-hearted killer! I knew. But that secret wouldn't have done me much good if I hadn't got out of that river. Thought I was crocodile meat, didn't you? Close Borgh—it was close!"

Stroud sat down and put his back against the wall. The Finn's pocked face was the color of a crocodile's belly. His hand brushed across his fear-crazed eyes and it seemed to become terribly heavy. It fell across his knee like a club of wood. Borgh spoke in an awed trembling voice.

"I saw it drag you down, Stroud, the big one. You're back from the grave!"

"And a rotten one, Borgh," Stroud said. "You know about crocs, Borgh, they like their meat gamey." Stroud shuddered. "That big one got me and

dragged me under, did he? He must have, Borgh. How could I have reached the bank? The croc stowed me away close under the bank where I would get ripe. Maybe he wasn't very hungry then. Maybe—funny Borgh, when I opened my eyes, I was laying on the bank—didn't feel so bad, just that taste of bad meat on my tongue.

"Six blacks looking down at me. They showed me the air hole in the bank where they had found me. I looked down into it. The water was deep and black. I was soaked to the skin. But Borgh, there was no water in my lungs! Puzzles me now—makes me shiver—a man thrown into the water dead has no water in his lungs when they pull him out. But I couldn't have been dead! I'm alive now, ain't I?"

"Go away! Go away, Stroud!"

The Finn was sick with horror. His eyelids looked terribly heavy.

"They put me in a canoe and took me to Port Moresby, Borgh. How did they know where to find me—in that pocket in the bank? I saw a black boy stretched out on a litter—looked dead. Bongalo said a spell was on him, that he wasn't dead. Borgh, what did you do to Sniffer Skene?"

THE Finn's heavy lids lifted.

"Sniffer? Ya mean ya d-don't know, Stroud?"

Borgh's brain although numbed with the horror of the night, whispered that Stroud was not something from the other world. He would have known Sniffer was dead. The Finn laughed a little.

Stroud, the fool, had no gun. Borgh moved his massive arms, set himself to make a lunge for the axe that leaned against the bulkhead not far from his heavy boots. Stroud's laugh stiffened him.

"You can't reach it, Borgh. You'll have to crawl after it. Try and get up!"

Borgh tried. His body from the

waist down would not respond. His arms got heavier and there was a terrible numbness creeping along his tongue. Sweat poured out of the Finn. Horror laid its cold hands on his throat and his breathing was a terrible effort. His lips moved but his tongue could not form words. His eyes screamed a question at Stroud.

"The black magic of Guinea followed you, Borgh. *Ju-Ju* or *Puri-Puri*, I don't know which. When I took the cartridges out of your gun, I put some stuff in that bottle of liquor. It's a poison, Borgh. They use it to tattoo the little cannibals back there. You take it in your stomach and it paralyzes you—takes about an hour, perhaps two before you feel its bite. It'll take you about six more hours to die. Your hearing lasts the longest. You go blind long before you stop hearing."

The Finn fought to move his legs. Terror oozing out of his slowing heart aggravated the paralysis sweeping through him. Borgh wanted to scream, but his vocal chords were dead. He was dead from the waist down too, and his head felt as if it were stuffed with slimy river mud. He was half a man, a quivering hulk that floundered in a pool of abject terror.

"Listen, Borgh. You didn't know about the foremast of the *Samarang*. It's a steel mast and too big for this tub. It's hollow, Mister Borgh, and a man can get inside it down there in the hold, if he knows how. Then you can climb up it by means of a Jacob's Ladder and get to an opening in it fifteen feet above the deck.

"I threw Monkey-face's knife at you from there. I got it the night I knocked him on the head. The owners of this tub were going to do some plain and fancy smuggling with that mast—rich silks from Saigon.

"How did I get aboard? The blacks saw to that. In a bale of sisal. The lighter brought me aboard with that last load of stuff."

Borgh could hear. He could not speak. The horror inside of him was running before the death that was creeping toward his heart. Sweat poured off his flat pocked face. He still was not sure that a ghost was not putting him on the rack. No man could have reached that river bank alive. Two hundred yards under water—a crocodile with a hold on him keeping him under to get him filled with water. Water makes things ripen.

"Dried mud and slime on my clothes when I got into that mast. The bilge water splashing around under us, Borgh, made it slimy and stinking again. I came out at night. I went to your cabin and got my big pipe and had a smoke. I took it back again. I carry a key to that cabin. I took grub from the galley. I knocked on your door and then ran away and hid myself again.

"Why did I go to all that trouble? The jade that hangs around your neck. I could have exposed you to the authorities in Moresby and had you hanged. But they would have heard about Bongalo's jade. They might have confiscated it. This thing had to be between you and me, Borgh. I wanted to kill you slow. A rope would have snuffed you out too fast." Stroud drew a sleeve across his face. His nerves were unsteady too.

"Sometimes I wonder—if it actually happened. But I was in that boat with you an' Sniffer. Then I—the blacks on the bank were pickin' me up. No water in me." The skipper's eyes took on a terribly strange look.

"I felt like a man groping along in the dark when I left that ravi, Borgh. Somethin' had gotten into me—what, I don't know."

Borgh's glazing eyes were fixed on Stroud but they could not see.

"I had to make sure about the crew, Borgh. I had to drive them with fear. They would have cut my throat if I had appeared on deck back there in the harbor and demanded the jade.

They were a blood-hungry lot and all that you'd have had to do would have been to tell them about the jade, promise them a share if they threw me overboard. I think I can handle what is left of them now. Gettin' closer and closer, isn't it, you devil? That *Ju-Ju* is powerful, eh?"

The Finn could not answer. In his brain thumped the jungle drums of New Guinea. He could no longer see. He knew he was doomed and horror was still thick in his sub-conscious. Stroud's voice droned on.

"Going to turn this ship over to the authorities, Borgh. I needed the berth bad—had to take it under those conditions. Back there on the bank of the river I told myself I must have been worth saving, for something—good enough to be saved by a miracle, whatever it was.

"The jade? That's a little different. I've earned it. That mandarin who had it first left three children and enough money for his heirs to buy half of China. I'll take that jade now, Borgh."

Borgh did not feel the leather thongs loosen at his bull neck. The hellish brew of the witch doctor bit deep into his heart and left him a corpse.

"You didn't know, Borgh," Stroud said in an awed voice, "that they said I wasn't to die in New Guinea. How did that old black devil—" A shudder went through Stroud and made his teeth rattle.

Back there in the ravi—a black boy stretched out stiff and stark—suspended animation? He did not know. He had to stop wracking his mind for an explanation. People went crazy trying to get the answer to things that they were not supposed to know.

STROUD cached the jade in a safe place and then took off his filthy clothes. He bathed and dressed himself in clean linen. Wearing his best suit, the skipper of the *Samarang* went up on deck and took over his

command. The second mate saw him walking up to the bridge and fell back against a bulkhead gasping wildly.

"Stroud—go away! Go away! You're dead!"

"Easy there, easy, Mister Hogue," Stroud grinned.

He walked up and placed his hand on the frightened man's arm. The second mate screamed briefly, then opened his eyes wide. He started laughing jerkily.

"Y-yeah, you ain't a ghost, Skipper. But what in the name of the devil—"

"Down in the cabin—a dead man," Captain Stroud said. "His name is Borgh. Better get rid of him in a hurry. He died in a mysterious manner—while I sat and looked at him. This ship isn't healthy for some skippers, is it, Hogue?"

He made the rounds of the wallowing ship and checked up on what was left of the crew. The horror crawled out of the dark recesses of the *Samarang* and went overboard with the remains of the giant Finn.

The wind died down and the heaving seas quieted a little. The pale moon broke through a rolling cloud mass and looked down upon Stroud who stood on the bridge. The *Samarang*, with the bone in its teeth plowed along at twelve knots an hour.

Back in Bongalo's compound, the

war drums throbbed. In the *ravi*, the old witch doctor squatted down near the carcass of a freshly killed flying fox. He poked at its warm drawn entrails with a little stick. They told him that Borgh, the man with the pock marks on his face, was dead. Just as the entrails of another had given him the grim picture of the attack upon Bongalo's white friend out there on the river, although he had been sitting here when it happened.

Only this old *Ju-Ju* priest could tell you how Stroud had survived after having been under water for nearly twenty minutes. But they do not tell white men of these strange mysteries of dark and bloody Guinea.

Bongalo's old sorcerer grinned through his mask and stared over at the black boy stretched out on the pallet. He would have to be kept there for another twelve hours, he thought. The fever devils would leave the boy soon, they would see that he was, to all appearances, dead anyway. They would be wasting their time.

The big crocodile, out there on the Sepik, had wasted little time with a man that was already dead. The croc had hurriedly dragged him to its ice-box and stored him there. Even in Kilanghi's unholy business, there was the element of chance, of course. If the big croc had been hungry now—

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Nobile of the "Italia"

By CHARLES S. STRONG

*Explorer, Traveler and Historian
Author of "Congo Drums," "Dominion for Rent," etc.*

*Here's the Inside Story of a Polar Expedition Long
Shrouded in a Veil of Mystery and Conjecture!*



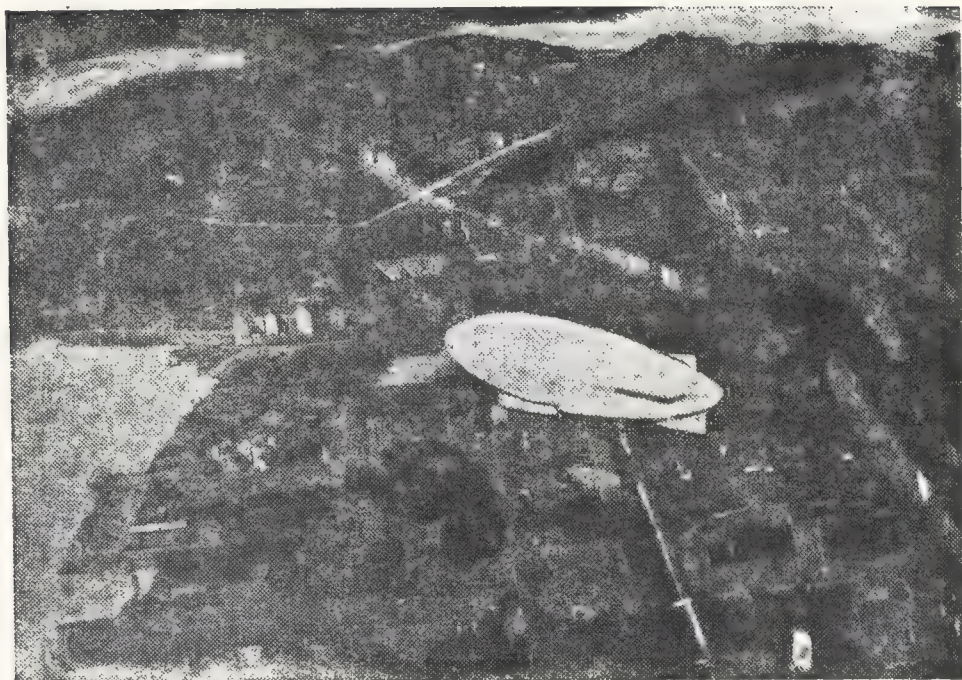
Major Sverre of the Norwegian Air Force
and Umberto Nobile after Norge Flight.

Photo Norwegian Government Railways

IT WAS the first day of the German invasion of Norway. Planes were droning overhead, battleships were bombing the towns on the Oslofjord and dropping heavy shells over the bulwarks of the Oskarsborg fortress. Up on the airdrome of Fornebo, an officer of the Norwegian Air Force, veteran of many adventurous Arctic explorations stirred himself, climbed into his uniform and buckled on his gun-belt.

As he stepped out on the airdrome, he was startled and surprised by the sight of scores of German military transport planes roaring onto the tarmac. Parachute troops with machine guns and side arms gathered at the far end of the airport and began to round up bewildered Norwegian anti-aircraft gun crews.

The officer was Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen. Second in command to the great Roald Amundsen in many expeditions, Riiser-Larsen was again called upon to make a great sacrifice for the glory of *Gamle Vakre Mor Norge*. The complete details of what happened on the field at Fornebo are still lacking. It is known, however, that almost single-handed, Riiser-Larsen attempted to halt the German air invasion. Some say that he was killed



"Italia" over Swedish capital, Stockholm, Nobile's expedition, May, 1928.

Photo Swedish State Railways

by an over-zealous German officer. Others declare that he is safe and well. Knowing Hjalmar as I do, and how important he is to Norway's air progress and its historic past and future, it certainly is to be hoped that the latter report is the true one. . . .

Feud's Beginning

The scene shifts in reverse to a winding mountain road outside of Rome, Italy.

A speedy Isotta-Fraschini roared around curves, its rear wheels seeming about to go over the edge of the road and hurl the occupants of the car to their deaths.

The reckless driver at the wheel was Umberto Nobile, a figure of rising importance in Italy's Air Force. Riding with him were Hjalmar Riiser-

Larsen and Roald Amundsen. Considering his own safety, and that of his comrade, Riiser-Larsen forced Nobile to bring the car to a halt, and took over the driving task himself.

This apparently inconsequential incident may have been the beginning of a festering anger that was to put the lives of many men into jeopardy, and which, a little more than two years later was to result in the deaths of some brave explorers. To some, in Italy and in other parts of the world, Umberto Nobile was a hero. By many others he has been considered a madman. The facts must speak for themselves.

That automobile trip was the aftermath of a flight made by Roald Amundsen, Lincoln Ellsworth, Riiser-Larsen, Lieutenant Dietrichsen, and

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two mechanics, Omdal and Feucht, in the airplanes N-24 and N-25. The goal, as yet unattained by air, was the North Pole. As a result of the air expedition, Amundsen, rounding out almost thirty years of polar exploration in the Arctic and Antarctic, decided that the best means of properly exploring the ice cap, or polar sea, was by dirigible.

Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen called Roald Amundsen's attention to the fact that the Italian Government had a dirigible, the N-1, for sale at an estimated price of \$100,000. Lincoln Ellsworth signified his willingness to put up the money. Amundsen thought the N-1 would be satisfactory, inasmuch as he had already been aboard the craft on a trial flight in 1923.

Whose Flag Shall Fly?

After the abortive trips in the N-24 and N-25, Amundsen, Riiser-Larsen and Ellsworth arrived in Oslo on July 4th, 1925. They discussed the dirigible en route, and when they reached Amundsen's home in the Norwegian capital, they immediately dispatched a telegram to Umberto Nobile, informing him of their interest in the purchase of the dirigible, and inviting the Italian army officer to visit them in

Norway. Nobile made the trip to Oslo.

The scene in the Amundsen house on his arrival was dramatic. Nobile, fancying himself as a conqueror, felt as though he could glower at and patronize these people who had invited him up for a business deal.

"I will make arrangements with the Italian Government to place the ship at your disposal free of charge," Nobile offered haughtily, "providing that you will permit it to fly the Italian flag on the trip across the polar regions."

Roald Amundsen came to his feet slowly. Perhaps the heritage of his French mother had something to do with his feeling toward Italy and things Italian.

"The dirigible I command shall fly but two flags," he said firmly. "The Norwegian flag for my homeland, and the American flag for my companion, Ellsworth. There is no reason why the Italian flag should be carried."

With this matter settled, though not to Nobile's satisfaction, the original asking price of \$100,000 for the dirigible was finally accepted. It was agreed that the crew would consist of Amundsen, Ellsworth, Riiser-Larsen, Omdal and Oscar Wisting. No-



"Italia" over the Stockholm Islands, en route to North Pole, 1928.

Photo Swedish State Railways



Members of N24-N25 Flight. L. to r. German mechanic Feucht, Norwegian mechanic Omdal, Hjalmar Riiser-Larsen, Lieutenant Dietrichsen, Roald Amundsen, Lincoln Ellsworth.

Photo Norwegian Government Railways

bile would also be on board with five Italian mechanics.

On March 29th, 1926, after extensive preparations in which the Aero Club of Norway participated by sending men to Spitsbergen to level the runway, build hangars and erect a pier for basing supply ships, the Amundsen-Ellsworth-Nobile *Norge* expedition was ready to take off. Additional expert help had been recruited for the journey, including Dr. Malmgren, the Swedish scientist. Jobs were allocated to each one.

High-Handed Effort

Work aboard the *Norge* was assigned carefully. Ellsworth had charge of the electrical observations; Riiser-Larsen was responsible for the navigation; Wisting and Horgen, a new addition, took care of the steering. Captain Gottwaldt was in charge of the wireless, and Dr. Malmgren made the meteorological observations. Umberto Nobile was in charge of the gas bags.

An exhibition of Nobile's erratic

recklessness developed on the trip. On the first third of the voyage, Oscar Wisting was working at the vertical controls. Nobile did not seem to like the way in which the experienced Norwegian aviator was handling his job and, leaving his position at the air-bag valves, he forcibly took the ship away from Wisting. He began twisting the controls and immediately the *Norge* started to plunge toward the ice. Wisting was amazed. He shouted at Nobile in a mixture of Norwegian and English, which confused the Italian.

Riiser-Larsen, with more responsibility than Wisting, and accustomed to making split second decisions, sprang to the wheel, pushed Nobile aside, and took over the ship. The near motor gondola missed crashing on the ice by inches.

Amundsen and Nobile argued heatedly over the incident, but within twenty minutes after it had occurred, a certain amount of calm had been restored.

Apparently Nobile had learned his

lesson. But after several hours had passed, his desire for greater importance than his position aboard called for, almost led to a second new disaster. A good part of the second half of the journey was made through fog, the *Norge* moving along at about fifty miles per hour.

Success Despite Interference

To avoid a possible crash on ice mountains, Amundsen had lifted the ship to a high altitude, but Nobile, nominally in charge of the gas bags, by his own request, made no effort to reduce the gas pressure. The pressure gauges spun and the pressure threatened to burst the bag. Nobile tried to get the ship down, but when it would not respond, he sat down on a camp stool and burst into tears.

Riiser-Larsen and Roald Amundsen took charge. They ordered three of the Norwegians to dash forward, and this shifting of the weight was enough to bring down the bow of the dirigible and prevent its destruction.

Just before the end of the flight, as the *Norge* was drawing near Point Barrow, Nobile's questions to Riiser-Larsen, while making up his final charts, indicated that the Italian knew little or nothing about navigation. In spite of this, Nobile insisted that Riiser-Larsen was on the wrong course, and tried to get him to change the line of flight of the craft.

In spite of the confusion, however, the flight was a complete success, showing a log of 3,391 miles flown over the North Pole in forty-two hours.

On three occasions Nobile had almost caused the wreck of the *Norge*, but when he returned to Italy in the summer of 1926, he was a national hero. He was promoted to the rank of general, was made a marquis, and appointed college professor.

When the question of Nobile's incompetence came up, it was declared by the Italian press to be propaganda in an attempt to steal Italy's thunder. More or less to permit Nobile to show

what he could do without the assistance of an American and a Norwegian, a second expedition was organized with the dirigible *Italia*. Nobile appeared to be willing to stand or fall on the results of this trip.

Racial Challenge

In May, 1928, Nobile was ready to go north. He used a base on Spitsbergen, after making his flight from Italy through Sweden to the Arctic. His first journey was a survey trip to the eastward over Franz Josef Land. From there he turned northward.

On May 24, much to the satisfaction of the Italians aboard, the *Italia* reached the North Pole. Mocking references to the lack of Norwegian and American assistants were made to Dr. Malmgren, the Swedish scientist. The stories that Nobile had nearly wrecked the *Norge* were pooh-poohed. Everyone was in a festive mood. But twenty-four hours later the story was an entirely different one.

On the morning of May 25, the *Italia* was flying over North East Land. As he had when aboard the *Norge*, General Nobile insisted on running the ship to suit himself—and the airship crashed on the ice. The gondola and main cabin were smashed and ten of the men were thrown out onto the cold, hard surface.

Freed of the weight of the men and the superstructure, the wrecked *Italia* rose quickly under the commanding pull of its motor and gas bags, and with seven other crew members vanished into the north. It has never been heard of since.

Alone on the Ice

The Nobile in command of a camp on the Arctic ice soon became a decidedly different man from the reckless, nervous, erratic "commander" of the *Norge* and general in the Italian Air Force. He knew almost nothing about survival in the Arctic, and as a result his little company found it difficult going for the next five days.

As soon as communication had been broken between the *Italia* and the Norwegian and other government radio stations, it was presumed that the craft had met with disaster. Searching parties were organized.

But if the Italians who were grounded with Nobile on polar ice were bewildered, the Scandinavian member of the party, Dr. Finn Malmgren, knew his way around. He offered to take a group of the Italian crew members back to the mainland over the ice. Besides having made the flight aboard the *Norge*, Malmgren also had held the meteorological post with Amundsen on his 1922 journey across the North Polar Basin.

Nobile and his second in command, Ceccioni, had been injured when the dirigible was wrecked. Their injuries, Nobile insisted, made it impossible for them to walk. So on May 30th, Malmgren, with two Italians, Mariano and Zappi, started out across the ice to hike to Cape North.

About June 15th, the trio reached Brock Island, and here Malmgren's legs were so frost-bitten that he was unable to go any further. Mariano and Zappi remained with him for some time, and then, when Malmgren saw that their supplies were running low, he insisted that they dig a trench and leave him. He directed them toward Cape North, and they went ahead to obtain provisions for the rest of the expedition.

As a memorial to Dr. Malmgren, a professorship has been founded at Uppsala University in Sweden.

Of the many rescue expeditions that went out to search for Nobile, three deserve particular mention. The first of these was under the direction of the Swedish pilot, Einar Lundborg. Wireless experts with the *Italia* expedition finally managed to rig up an emergency sending set after being fourteen days on the ice, and on June 9th, they sent out their bearings and asked for help. Captain Lundborg, of the Swedish Air Force, picking up the

wireless message, located the party, and on June 23rd picked up Nobile and several members of his party.

Martyr to Service

Five days before this, however, Roald Amundsen, more than willing to forget his own difference with Nobile when it was a matter of life and death, procured a seaplane, the *Latham*, from the French Government and headed north out of Tromsø, Norway. A crowd was on the dock the afternoon of June 18, 1928, when Amundsen, Lieut. Dietrichsen of N-25 fame, Capt. Guilbaud of French Air Service, and three other airmen headed into the frosty north. Three hours later a last message was received.

On August 31, while on board a fishing trawler off the north coast of Norway, a party I was with located a pontoon that was definitely identified as a part of the equipment of the *Latham*—a grim buoy marking the ocean burial place of six brave men. Amundsen and his party were definitely given up for lost and, like Franklin, Andree, and others, his fate is a mystery of the Arctic.

The third rescue expedition that earned an accolade for itself was that of the Russian Tchuknovsky, who located Mariano and Zappi on July 12th.

The question as to whether Amundsen or Nobile had been telling the correct story in the matter of the Italian general's inexperience aboard the *Norge* seemed to be definitely and completely answered by the *Italia* débâcle. Even the Italians, anxious to gloss over the facts and whitewash their own men as much as possible could not ignore this damaging blow to Italian air prestige. In 1929 an Italian Commission of Enquiry condemned Nobile for the loss of the *Italia*. He resigned his rank of general, and retired.

It is unfortunate that the lives of many heroic explorers had to be sacrificed to show the world the error of Nobile's ways.

Death Haunts the Icefield

By HAROLD F. CRUICKSHANK

Author of "The Blood Moon," "Death's Head Patrol," etc.



Snarling, Yanu backed Nanook forcibly away
from her kill

*Survival of the Fittest—That is
the Code of the Hunters and the
Hunted in Barren Arctic Wastes!*

YANU, the big she-polar bear, snuffed salt water from her nostrils—the spume she had taken in at her furious dive.

Her massive "forearms" pulled her through the frigid water at a terrific pace. Her small, red-rimmed eyes spilled flame as they glared on a grim tragedy taking place ahead. Already one of her few-months-old cubs had been stricken down by Chug, the monstrous one-tusked, one-eyed walrus chieftain. And squealing frantically, the second cub was threshing water in an effort to es-

cape that ruthless old killer who hated the bear kind more than any other creature in all the Arctic waters.

The cub attempted to dive, but received a savage flipper blow which almost stunned him.

Shrilling strange throat sounds, Yanu turned on the last ounce of her speed, but was still a hundred yards from her young one when Chug reared. Down smashed that lone fighting tusk of Chug's.

Blood spurted from a gaping wound in the young bear's side. He rolled over, almost lifeless as Yanu charged. But Yanu was no match for Chug, especially in the water, where he is king. Weighing almost three times as much as the polar bear, he roared and struck. Yanu dived, but that curved spear of ivory raked her badly, laying open her right ear and rowelling her shoulder.

For some time Yanu swam under water. But at last she emerged, filled her lungs, then whirled. Her cub was sinking. Chug was bellowing as he churned water in search of the great white bear. Handicapped by the loss of an eye, he had, for the moment, lost Yanu's position.

Seizing this brief respite, Yanu rushed in and seized the cub in her massive jaws. Turning, she struck off, keeping to Chug's blind side, toward the nearest ice floe.

Cheated of another kill, Chug snorted and bellowed raucously, smashing water first with one huge flipper, and then the other.

But Yanu had already reached the ice flow haven, and shoved the limp form of her young one onto it. Top-side herself, she dragged the cub well in from the sea edge and began to muzzle him and lave his gaping side. She called softly, but there was no response. The young one was stone dead. His blood oozed out to stain the ice a dull crimson.

For a long time Yanu swayed and weaved about her son's body, utter-

ing strange little sounds for one of her nine hundred pound bulk. Slowly, surely, though, her agitation became more and more accentuated. Suddenly, jaws agape, she whirled to her haunches and threshed at empty air bellowing her wrath and hatred; voicing threats. . . .

SWIMMING far out, back to join his family, Chug did not turn. He simply snorted disdainfully and continued on his way. . . .

In all the God-forsaken sea and ice wilderness there is no more devoted mother than the polar bear. Yanu was no exception. Only every second year or so did she mate, and usually she bore twin cubs. It was then that she moved inland, into some snow cave of her own digging, a cave which was converted into an ice cave. There she became the prey of hunting Eskimos, but it was there that she brought her younglings into the world—alone, with no mate standing by.

After a time, in the spring, she brought them out to sea, where the seal-hunting was good.

This morning she had placed the young ones on an ice pan, while she skimmed off to stalk a seal. Chug had caught the bear scent and had stolen up on the far side of the pan. It had taken but a moment for Chug to smash that small ice plateau into splinters, hurtling the cubs into the water. There, they became easy prey.

Last winter, by a sheer miracle had Yanu and her cubs escaped death together at the hands of a copper-faced man creature, Nagliuk, the Eskimo hunter. Nagliuk had sworn to stretch the huge, handsome hide of Yanu on the snow floor of his igloo. He had blamed Yanu for the loss of a boy child two years ago.

Nagliuk had sworn to his kinfolk that Yanu, and her huge wandering mate, Nanook, should pay. Ay-ah-h! Nagliuk spoke with vehemence, raving, screaming.

Mitchuk, the shaman of the tribe, had listened to these ravings. He hated Nagliuk thoroughly. He coveted Nagliuk's youngest wife, but he had performed the mock ceremony of smearing Nagliuk's body with bear blood; and nobody but himself knew that the blood was that of a fur seal.

Yanu knew nothing of this. Now, reconciled in part, to the loss of her brood, she must think of that gnawing hunger in her great, gaunt stomach. Her cubs had exacted a heavy toll of her, and now she must hunt and build up her strength again. For one day she must catch Chug off guard. She would sneak up on his colony while the adults were asleep, and snatch at a walrus calf.

Now suddenly she reared her long head and sniffed sharply. Far to the eastward she spotted a dim black speck on the ice, but it was her keen sense of smell that decided for her that the speck was a sleeping seal.

Yanu took to the water with sinuous grace. Her hind legs stretched back as her "forearms" went into action.

At last, by sheer instinct, she was able to make out the seal's position. Cautiously, she climbed out onto the floe again. Curling her forepaws, she commenced that snakelike stalking of her prey, a fat seal which snored contentedly beside its *atluk*—escape hole.

Behind the seal, the ice rose in miniature hills, or hummocks, beyond which Yanu could not see.

THIRTY yards now separated her from the seal. Now fifteen—five. . . . She was within leaping distance, all her muscle fibres taut, ready to catapult, when suddenly a rocking blow in the right shoulder staggered her. The blow was accentuated by a sharp gush of flame and reverberating thunder!

In a flash, the seal had vanished down the *atluk*. Yanu didn't know what this strange thunderous sound was. She didn't know that a small

black object moved just over the crest of the nearest ice hummock, or that the speck was the head of Nagliuk; or that the spitting fire came from a gun in his hands.

Yanu had never before heard the blast of rifle fire; nor had she ever felt the shock of a striking bullet until now.

She bellowed and smashed fiercely at small hunks of loose ice. Something screamed past her head, a whining thing that whistled more shrilly than the wind. And again the silent Arctic wastes were blasted by that thunderous sound.

Then, at last, a cross wind brought the man scent to her nostrils. She was at once impelled to charge, but mingling with that man scent was the acrid tang of powder fumes. Something new and terrible seemed to warn her of its grim association with that gaping wound in her shoulder.

When a bullet kicked up ice spume into her face, Yanu whirled and scuttled quickly to the edge of the floe. She dived and submerged. Coming up far from the floe's edge, she heard Nagliuk screeching his curses upon the distant head of the trader who had sold him the rifle which had not killed. Ay-ah-h-h!

The trader had shown him how to align the sights, how to shoot, to kill; and Nagliuk had once shot a seal with the rifle at close range, a feat which warranted a great feast at the dance igloo of the shaman. Ay-ah-h-h! Nagliuk was the greatest of all hunters. But he had come for Yanu's hide, and had failed! He would probably return with a story only an Eskimo is capable of concocting.

He moved over near the *atluk* where he had glimpsed the crimson-stained ice—Yanu's bloodstain. Nagliuk flashed his knife and hacked out chunks of this crimsoned ice and placed it in the secret charm pocket of his *attigi*—coat.

The ice would melt. His chest would be stained with the blood of

Yanu. Yaie! Already his fabricated story percolated in his crafty brain.

Nagliuk's people hailed him with much clamor. He swaggered grandiosely to the dance hut, where he peeled off his *attigi*, so that all could see the crimson smear that stained his chest.

Mitchuk, an evil, pockmarked shaman strode into the meeting place, where the stench of oily bodies blended malodorously with that of smoky seal lamps.

Mitchuk at once began some weird incantations. Though he played up to Nagliuk, he hated the hunter with all the venom of his black heart. Now he called upon Nagliuk for his story.

NAGLIUK swaggered back and forth, flashing narrowed glances at the eager faces about him. He began to gesticulate, wildly pantomining for some moments before he spoke.

"I, Nagliuk," he began pompously, "the mightiest of all hunters, went with my firestick to seek out Yanu; to kill Yanu. But as I neared the ice knolls, close to the *atluk* of Eugk, the seal, I was met by Ugpiq, the wise, snowy owl. Ugpiq bore a message from Yanu. . . ."

Nagliuk broke off. He had caught a sly leer from Mitchuk, the shaman, who knew that Nagliuk's story was a fabrication.

"And I listened to Ugpiq who said: 'Lay down thy thunder stick, Nagliuk. Thou art no coward. Yanu will meet thee in battle!' Ay—ah-h! I at once laid down the firestick and went to meet Yanu. With my knife alone I met her; Yanu with her jaws wide to receive me.

"One stroke of my knife I gave; one stroke, which let her blood pour onto my chest. With soft words, the words of a coward, Yanu turned and fled to the sea. She called to Nanook, the great one. But I, Nagliuk, laughed at her back. I told her that one day I would return and kill her and Na-

nook, for I am Nagliuk, the great hunter. . . ."

The natives made guttural sounds of approval as they got to their feet to hail the great one. They filed out, leaving Nagliuk alone with Mitchuk. Nagliuk was uneasy, for there was an evil light in the slitted eyes of the shaman.

"Hast anything to say, shaman?" he asked.

A thin leer crossed Mitchuk's evil face.

"Thou art indeed a mighty hunter, Nagliuk," he muttered gutturally. "But also the greatest of liars. That blood. True, it might be the blood of Yanu, but how is it there is no blood on the outside of thy *attigi*?"

Deep silence followed, save for the deep breathing of the primitive men who hated each other fiercely.

"Well, what is it, wise one?" Nagliuk at last murmured. "What do you want?"

Mitchuk grunted and placed a forefinger alongside his pockmarked nose.

"I want Neyoc, thy youngest wife, great one."

A low gasp escaped Nagliuk. Neyoc was the youngest, prettiest wife in all the encampment. She was a good worker, and she walked with the grace of a caribou fawn.

But Mitchuk was all-powerful in the tribe. He was their shaman, their medicine man. Neyoc must be the price of Mitchuk's silence. Nagliuk nodded, then slipping on his *attigi*, he moved over to his own skin summer hut and gave orders to Neyoc.

"But have heart, little caribou," he murmured. "One day thou wilt return to Nagliuk."

He gnashed his teeth and almost foamed at the mouth in his wild rage. Outside he shrieked, and his tribesfolk took it as a hunting frenzy, his wild vows to kill Yanu and her great white mate, Nanook. . . .

* * * * *

Yanu had swum very far out to sea, to a smaller ice pan, there to lave

her shoulder wound on which the salt water had already done some good antiseptic work. Her shoulder, however, was stiff and sore from the long swim, albeit the bleeding had stopped. Now, there could be no more seal hunting for some time.

Moaning softly, she turned and sniffed into an off-shore wind, which brought the tang of bird-life from Desolation Island. Yanu loved the open sea, but now she must turn her back on the floes, until her strength was fully regained. She would forage for duck eggs and the eggs of other bird-life on the rugged island.

As she swam the many miles to shore, screaming bird-life swooped down. She thought they mocked her, and her mounting anger became a blazing hatred of all living things. But deeply implanted in her brain cells was a special hatred for the man creature and for Chug, the walrus chieftain.

As the short summer moved on, Yanu grew stronger. Her wound had healed, leaving a knotty wart of cartilage in her shoulder. But all her reflexes worked perfectly again. There was still that great power in both her forearms and paws. From time to time, along with the scar of the wound made by Chug's tusk, her shoulder scar irritated her, but only served to prime her fierce anger.

This morning, she longed for the open sea, whose tang forever stang her nostrils, and whose roar against the rugged, forsaken shoreline, was like a call.

She sat now massaging her empty stomach, glowering through red-rimmed eyes. As a gull swooped down, to squawk almost in her eardrums, Yanu reared and smashed savagely, though futilely at the winged one.

Then suddenly she spun on her haunches. From the east, on an on-shore wind, there came the tang of food—much food. Yanu dropped to her four massive paws and began to

sway from side to side. About a mile to the winward, shoved along by wind and ice pans, came the bloated carcass of a whale.

Gulls screamed a wild chorus. Already they were at work upon the partly rotted carcass. Suddenly, Yanu stiffened. She had identified the scent of other bears, and with it the scent of her last season's lordling mate, Nanook, the king of all polar bears. She saw Nanook swimming along in the wake of the whole.

Yanu watched the heavy seas pile the carcass of E-piuik, the dead whale, high up on the rocks. She then saw Nanook clamber ashore and stretch himself to his full height. But from the far side of the whale, there came the ugly throat sound of a stranger bear, a huge, squat shape which had come in from inland.

Three young bears that had followed in Nanook's wake, now backed away, swaying in behind Yanu, who snarled savagely. She shuffled forward, and then bellied down to watch Nanook rush to meet his challenger.

NANOOK, the mighty one, whirled from the gaping, slashing jaws of his opponent. The other, lighter in weight than Nanook, was no less a formidable foe. He was younger, with a greater depth and breadth of chest. He feinted and smashed a lightning "one-two" attack to Nanook's head. The oldster rocked back off balance. And like a flash, the younger one was in on him, his fangs driving viciously for Nanook's throat.

Yanu's whole form quivered. She stiffened and got to her haunches, ready to rush. But suddenly, Nanook's huge paws struck upward, catching the younger bear in the middle. That powerful blow rocketed his opponent back about fifteen feet.

With an alacrity that belied his eleven hundred pounds, Nanook rushed. They rose together, snapping, biting, tearing like two gargantuan hounds. Blood gushed, staining

the foam which flicked from their slobbering jaws. Dull, cream-colored coats were now stained a sodden, dirty crimson.

At last they dropped to all fours and began to sway and weave about each other. A patrol which seemed to have no ending. But it ended with tragic suddenness.

The bombastic young giant, short on wisdom, whirled his hulk in an attack on Nanook. Nanook, instead of standing his ground, went flying over backwards. The young one overshoot, as Nanook had intended. And before he could recover, Nanook's mighty tusks and cutters were at his throat. Now, no longer did Nanook attack with short, snapping bites. He clung to his throat hold with everything he had. Then he tossed back, and upward, his mighty head. The fight was done! Windpipe and jugular were severed.

Nanook was now more terrible than ever as he began the patrol of conquest around the fallen one's limp shape. And all at once he lashed himself around, onto his haunches. Blooded head stretched on his long neck, he sniffed hard into the off-shore wind. Yanu, like a streak, was at his side. Her sense of smell was even keener than Nanook's.

She growled, for that wind now brought the dread, hated scent of the man creature who had wounded her. And with it, though less distinct, the odor of another man creature.

Yanu, the wise one, made throat signals to her kinfolk. Head lowered, Nanook followed Yanu into the shelter of the close-in rock boulders, there to watch for the oncoming man creatures. . . .

Nagliuk again had boasted that he would kill Yanu. He had sworn never to return without her hide. With his rifle he had gone out to search the ice floes for sign of Yanu, or of Nanook; or both.

But—Ay-ah-h! From afar he had glimpsed the whale carcass. He pad-

dled his kayak more furiously along, his eyes popping. There could be no greater discovery than the mountainous carcass of the whale. Strapped to his kayak in its waterproof skin bag was the deadly rifle.

A mile in Nagliuk's wake paddled Mitchuk. Mitchuk was not satisfied with having appropriated Nagliuk's prettiest wife; he wanted Nagliuk's life, too. Nagliuk had scoffed at some of his magic and the hunter was dangerous.

Now Nagliuk vanished from sight in a shoreward haze.

AT THE rocky shoreline, Nagliuk quickly beached his kayak, and unshipped his rifle. He had barely taken a few steps forward, when he glimpsed the dead form of the polar bear.

"Ayaie!" He half screamed the excited exclamation as he rushed forward. "Nanook!" he cried, and then suddenly a crafty idea sparked in his brain. He would skin this big one and take the skin back to the encampment, with his news of the discovery of the whale. He would pour shots into the bear's form, to prove that he, Nagliuk had at last killed the great Nanook.

Nagliuk fired two shots. Then, laying his rifle to one side, he moved in to skin out the bear.

He was kneeling, working at the hind legs with his knife when he heard the approach of Mitchuk. Nagliuk looked up with a start, flame lancing from his slitted eyes. Nagliuk flicked a glance swiftly at the spot at which he had laid his firestick, but it was no longer there. Mitchuk had removed it, had hidden it.

Grinning cruelly, the shaman unsheathed his knife. It was not wise for any member of the tribe to scoff at his magic or medicine.

Nagliuk at once leaped and raised his dripping knife blade to the sky, where he invoked the aid of his wild gods. Then whirling, he faced the shaman.

"What now, Mitchuk?" he intoned gutturally.

"I hunt Eyak, the seal, when I see the great body of E-piuk, the whale," the shaman answered. "But I find you here—Nagliuk, the mighty one. So great a bear! It could almost be Nanook himself!"

Nagliuk made a strange clacking sound with his tongue against his teeth.

"Mitchuk, the great one of magic," he growled. "This bear I myself kill, with the firestick. Look at the holes in his hide. Look at the knife slash in the throat. I am the greatest of all hunters, for I have slain Nanook!"

"Ay—uh! So!" Mitchuk grunted. "But thou hast not slain Nanook. This one is smaller, and has not Nanook, the great, a gray patch in his left shoulder? Thou art again the greatest of all liars, Nagliuk."

From her place of hiding, her body all aquiver, Yanu watched the man creature leap.

It was Nagliuk who leaped to attack. Mitchuk tripped and went down backwards. But he whipped his legs about Nagliuk's and struck savagely upward with his knife. They fought with bestial fierceness. Not yet had the missionaries visited their nomadic tribe. They knew only the one law, the one code: the survival of the fittest!

Nagliuk was the heavier of the two, and now his greater weight began to assert itself. Grinning, he drove his knife blade deep into Mitchuk's chest. And as he withdrew it, blood gushed into his face. Just then, a great bird swooped in low, and screamed. Nagliuk whirled to watch the big gull go shrieking out to sea.

"Ay-ah-h-h!" he gasped. To him, that big bird had carried the death cry of Mitchuk away, off to the tribal encampment. Many men would come hunting for Nagliuk and would kill him.

Nagliuk was suddenly afraid. He started to back off. Mitchuk's body

made a strangely ghostlike sound. With a cry at his lips, Nagliuk whirled and rushed for the rocks.

Seeing this, Yanu subdued a snarl. Her body tensed. She interpreted the flight of the man creature as an attack upon her. She rose, then crashed down a smashing blow of her right forepaw which turned Nagliuk's face and skull into jelly.

Now there was only Chug to settle with. . . .

FOR upwards of half an hour the bears encircled the man creatures. Never before had they been so close to man. But now the polar dusk was shaking its desolate mantle down on the barren ice wilderness.

Nanook grunted, and whirling, stalked to the carcass of E-piuk, where all five bears revelled in the succulent, partly rotted blubber.

With the coming of full night, other bears appeared from the sea and in-shore, to join in the feast. But none challenged the might of Nanook, or Yanu. In the gloom, there were no sounds save the intermittent groan and crack of meeting ice pans, the lap of waves in slack tide, and the slosh—slosh of fangs in the whale blubber.

For upwards of a week Yanu remained at the carcass of E-piuk, feasting, putting on weight. But each day she took long swims out to sea, skirting the packing ice pans which started to close in now.

Sometimes, Nanook accompanied Yanu on her long swims. But mostly he slept off the effects of the blubber gorges. He had lost a lot of blood in his fight with the stranger bear. But now he was ready for the sea and elected to lead Yanu and the three younger bears in a raid on the seal waters.

Foul weather, however, upset their plans. A swirling snow whistled in on a stiff northeasterly half gale, forcing the white bears up onto a large ice floe, where they sought cover in the lee of ice hummocks. They

bedded down while the polar gods hurled their weather forces against the grim Arctic wilderness.

Yanu, it was, who first broke cover. The snow had ceased, but the whining wind still continued. Despite the packing ice which closed in from all quarters, it seemed heavy seas crashed over the ice floe, showering Yanu and her kindred with salt spume.

Off to the northeast, a small pan of ice was being whirled in a cross current. Now it came hurtling toward the main field. Yanu shook the salt spray from her eyes and uttered fierce, deep throat sounds. Two figures moved on that hurtling ice pan. Yanu's keen nose was identifying them. The one was the huge, squat shape of Chug; the other, a small walrus calf!

Stormy weather had brought tragedy to the walrus family. Chug was hurt, caught in between crushing ice floes. While attempting the rescue of two calves, one of his ponderous, formidable flippers had been badly smashed.

He snorted raucously now as he nudged the calf away from him, to better safety aboard the pan. As if conscious of the ultimate fate of the floe, when it crashed against the main icefield, Chug was in ugly temper. He struck the pan sharply with his lone tusk and made thick, guttural noises.

YANU, the great white one, had bellied down in the new snow. Now, mouthing soft gasps, she began to weave back to the cover of the hummocks, drawing Nanook with her. Ordinarily, Nanook wouldn't have shown any concern at the presence of the walrus kind, save to perhaps make a bluff by threshing madly at empty air and pouring out a few bellows. Even Nanook had learned to give Chug a wide berth.

But Yanu had remembered the loss of her young. She had lost her cubs to this great one-tusker. She had seen

(Continued on page 104)

TIRED ALL THE TIME?



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(Continued from page 103)

the great curved spear of ivory strike down into the vitals of her young. And now Chug came toward her. The scent of his blood told her that he was badly wounded.

Swiftly now, the ice pan approached the field. Suddenly, as if rocketed by some submarine force unseen, the pan lifted, whirled in and there was a deafening crash.

Blatting in terror, the calf was toppled into the water, and like a flash, Nanook broke from Yanu's side, to go diving to the kill. Quickly, he struck the calf a thudding blow with his massive right forepaw.

Sprawled grotesquely on the main field, Chug saw this. He had heard the call of his calf, and now he glimpsed the huge, serpentine form of Nanook swimming around the young one. On his one flipper, Chug awkwardly propelled himself toward the edge of the field, mouthing his throaty bellows. The calf's blood was beginning to flow.

It was a runty calf, weighing no more than two hundred pounds. His hide was tender, otherwise, in the water, Nanook might have experienced difficulty in despatching it. But Nanook was one of great experience. He harried the young one with slashing strokes of his paws, and then, as it suddenly half rolled, Nanook struck and gave it the *coup de grace*.

Chug's voice sounds now were horrible. They thundered above the roar of the wind. He struck the ice floe with his tusk and snorted. As though now ashamed, the wind subsided to a sobbing moan.

As Nanook lifted the dead calf up onto the floe, Chug, the killer, attempted to attack; but he flopped heavily down on his badly crushed flipper.

So preoccupied was he in his attempted attack on Nanook that he failed to observe the four other white ones creeping in at the rear.

Yanu, trailed by the young bears,

whose hatred of Chug and all the walrus family, was instinctive, crept in to attack. Nanook seized the calf by a flipper and dragged it to safety. He licked the blood from his chops, then suddenly reared. He had glimpsed Yanu and the others beyond Chug's huge form.

Suddenly, Chug whirled. He lost balance momentarily but recovered as a young bear broke formation. That deadly lone tusk of the walrus chieftain swung and struck, catching the young bear a hard, though glancing blow across the left shoulder, laying it open.

By his tail and one flipper, Chug propelled himself along miraculously well, snorting as he went. But he experienced great difficulty when he rose to strike—difficulty in retaining his proper balance. Chug had killed many of the bear family. He was a tyrant of the icefields, but now he faced his most bitter enemies. He was about to smash down on the wounded bear again, when Nanook rushed, snarling.

CHUG spun and smashed a strong sidewise swipe at Nanook. His ivory tip raked Nanook's flank, adding another wound, another scar, to that battle-scarred big one. Nanook whipped back, then in again. He attacked after the fashion of a big hound, or wolf—in and out, biting, snapping. But old Chug's wrinkled hide was tough. Seldom did those bear tusks even penetrate that thick layer of skin.

Yanu's eyes glowed terribly as she crouched back. She watched Nanook gradually pull Chug toward him. Mounting fierceness raged in her soul. Chug must die, but the task was not an easy, or swift one. Only by harrying him, playing him out, could the bears hope to kill him. Despite the handicap of a useless flipper, Chug was still a formidable foe.

Pushed by their youthful urge to show their fighting strength, the

young bears crowded Yanu for action, but she snapped them back.

For an hour, two hours, Nanook, ahead, and Yanu, astern, harrassed the great sea elephant. They gave him not a moment's rest; not a moment's peace. They forced him to rear up onto his tail, or good flipper, then sent him crashing down off balance on to his badly wounded side.

Chug began to breathe with labored effort. He blew and snorted more often. His bellowing calls became fewer and were more strained. But never in all their fighting experience along the icefields had Nanook and Yanu met and engaged a more dangerous enemy. Chug fought with a love of battle; Yanu, because of the loss of her young. Her soul was alive with the cry of vengeance. Her code was:

"An eye for an eye . . ."

Screaming bird life, taking advantage of the lessening of the wind velocity, went skimming in low, bound for the rugged shoreline of Desolation Island.

Darkness fell. But the attack of Yanu and her lordling mate never lessened. Hour after hour they harried the big ugly walrus chieftain, until blood gushed from his wounded side.

Neither Yanu nor Nanook escaped without injury. That deadly ivory tusk had laid open Yanu's cheek below her right eye, which now seemed to want to spill from its socket.

Yanu dealt one of the young bears a smashing blow across the shoulder as he elected to rush Chug on his own. Yanu now saw the end of Chug in sight. She wanted to deliver the *coup de grace* herself. Not even Nanook would be allowed that honor and privilege. She was the one Chug had be-reaved.

She began to sway and weave, while her climactic anger mounted. She mouthed hideous sounds and wails. They were all mingled in a deathly concerto, a nocturne of icefield death.

(Continued on page 112)

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The GLOBE TROTTER



GREETINGS, fellow globe trotters! It's open house as always to you roving correspondents whether you rove the printed page or earth's highways and byways—the open house of **THRILLING ADVENTURES**, where the fictional food and drink are varied and where no one is turned away. What'll you have, sourdough? Biscuits to break a *chechako's* teeth? We've got 'em. Just claw the Alaskan icicles out of your beard and fall to.

Is it a helping of *poi* you want, *kamaina*, old-timer of the mystic isles of the South Seas? You know what to do and you need no knife or fork. Whether you be black-bird, pearly or trade-goods man, the only proper way to eat *poi* is with the fingers. There's *kava* to wash it down, or coconut brandy, if your head is strong.

Yes, fellow rovers, it's a groaning board of varied viands, this business of adventure. And variety, the spice of life, is also the pepper, the ginger of your favorite magazine, **THRILLING ADVENTURES**. The salt of the Seven Seas is in it too. Eat hearty, breathe deep!

Speaking of the Seven Seas, the salt-spray of the South Pacific blows strong in this particular issue of **THRILLING ADVENTURES**. And speaking of *kava*, no one knows more about that Polynesian epitome of potency than our own well-known trekker of adventure's trails and ace yarn-spinner, Crawford Sullivan, author of **SOUTH SEAS GOLD**.

Suppose we let *him* tell about it. There's nothing like listening to the man who's actually been there. Crawford is one of those authors who lives as he writes. The following letter from him will tell you what I mean:

Dear Globe Trotter:

There are many things I might mention in connection with this story, **SOUTH SEAS GOLD**, but one that stands out in my mind most is a trip I made up the Rewa River.

Eight of us climbed into an outboard-propelled punt near the town of Nausori: four Americans, an Australian, a Fijian chief and his "man," and an Indian boatman. Some kind of tropical bug had crept into my system, and as we started out I was deathly ill. The farther up the river we went, the worse I got. When it began to rain.

Nobody had thought to bring a coat, and pretty soon the tropical rain began to feel like a shower of lee water. I sat in the bow of the boat, shivering like a wet dog, and wondering why the heck I'd gotten into this mess anyway.

The natives didn't seem to mind it, though, and the boatman sat in the stern like an ugly

inscrutable gargoyle. Halfway up the river they borrowed a washbasin from a village, slushed some river water into it and mixed *kava*. Just as they offered me a coconut shell full of the stuff, I spotted a large and very dead cow floating downstream.

Figuring I couldn't feel any worse, I quaffed the drink and waited to see what would happen. By the time we got to Vunindawa I was a little better. We stayed in the native magistrate's *buri* that evening and sat around on the floor guzzling more *kava*. After a good night's sleep I woke up—mutilated by mosquitoes—but feeling like a new man.

We hiked up to another village later on and had some green *kava*—potent stuff. Then came a roistering evening with much singing, dancing—and *kava*—which lasted until the wee small hours. When we finally left, I was saturated with *kava*—and as fit as a fiddle.

I wish this could be taken as a testimonial for the medicinal and health-giving qualities of the South Sea islander's favorite beverage, but, as a matter of fact, all the other boys came back to Suva sick!

Sincerely,
Crawford Sullivan.

Kava, globe trotters, is a rather remarkable drink. Although non-alcoholic, it's plenty intoxicating. But perhaps the most startling thing about it is the peculiar way in which it is made. Crawford Sullivan didn't go into details, but here's the gist of it.

The roots or leaves of the plant—it is a kind of pepper plant—are first chewed usually, by young boys or girls. Care is taken that the chewers possess sound teeth and excellent general health. The chewed material is then placed in a bowl and water or coconut milk is poured over it. Crawford's men used water. The mixture is well stirred and the woody matter removed. What's left is the drink, *kava*, sweet to the taste at first, then pungent and acrid. Crawford Sullivan sure can take it! As for us, we'll take ginger ale. How about you, globe trotters?

Spanish Main Plot

That inimitable *raconteur* and master of variety both in life and fiction, Joe Archibald, has sent us a letter that tells the story behind the story of **THE DEVIL'S STOWAWAY** in this issue. In it you will see how a man can get material for a story about New Guinea even though he's in the Bahamas half a world away. Let's listen to Joe:

Dear Globe Trotter:

Strangely enough, the plot for my story **THE DEVIL'S STOWAWAY**, in the current issue of

THRILLING ADVENTURES, was picked up on the Spanish Main, and you all know that the West Indies is on the other side of the world from New Guinea. How come? Well, I was sitting in Dirty Dick's in Nassau, the Bahamas, when I met Sanders.

Sanders was an Englishman with a weather-beaten, leathery face, and I could smell the salt spray on him. I lost no time in striking up an acquaintance.

"A tourist?" he asked me, and his voice was a little sour.

"I wouldn't say so," I replied. "I've been bumming around on that banana boat out there in the harbor."

I went on to tell him I had been to Caracas and Jamaica and Haiti, and that the real purpose of my trip was to get a look at the voodoo rites at the last mentioned place.

"I saw the blacks making voodoo in the shadows of San Souci, the ruined castle of Christophe," I said. "I don't care to see them again. I still hear those drums when I try to sleep."

Sanders laughed. "Voodoo? If you think that's something, you haven't seen Black Magic yet. Not unless you've been to New Guinea. Let's go over in the corner and sit down."

We did, and he told me a story. He told me about Ju-Ju in New Guinea and the weird rites practised along the Sepik in that wild, brooding land. Only a few miles from Port Moresby, he told me, there is not the slightest sign of civilization. He had witnessed things that he did not expect me to believe.

"I actually saw a witch doctor shrivel a native's arm by willing it. The natives along the Sepik believe that death occurs only as the result of sorcery. It is a universal belief in New Guinea. I saw a witch doctor work his will on a sick boy. To all outward appearances, this black boy was dead. The sorcerer made it clear that the demon that possessed the patient's body could not survive if there was no soul upon which to feed."

"I was skeptical and expected to see them bury the native within a few hours. For almost two days the black lay in a stupor. Then he snapped out of his apparent coma and left the hut a well boy. What was it? Suspended animation? Call it anything you like. I saw other things take place before my eyes that were absolutely incredible. What does an old witch doctor see in the warm entrails of a flying fox? He pokes at the ghastly stuff with a stick while he brews his hellish power. I don't blame you for doubting, old chap. But there is a woman who will vouch for everything I have told you. She is a writer like yourself. She is the only white woman ever to have traveled into the interior of New Guinea's steaming jungle. Her name is Beatrice Grimshaw. Ask her, if you ever chance to meet her."

I smelled a plot. I said: "Go on, Sanders."

Sanders went on. "I went into the jungle with an English explorer. I was in Port Moresby waiting for a berth and had time on my hands. My finances were low. On the way into the interior, a native boy fell out of the boat and a croc got him. They grow them big in New Guinea. Hold onto that drink, old chap, for you're due for a bit of a shock. We made camp up the river after we lost that native boy. He walked in on us as big as you please when we were having our dinner! He was covered with slime and bleeding from a hundred scratches and he stank to high heaven. How did it happen? Sorcery? A witch doctor owned his soul? No—he was alive simply because of the idiosyncrasy of the man-eating crocodile. He—"

But you know the story. I have written it in **THE DEVIL'S STOWAWAY**. I had the waiter bring Sanders two more brandies for I knew he had put a check in my pocket. Yes, there's still doubloons to be found along the Spanish Main. Go to the crossroads of the world if you are barren of plots. You will meet men like Sanders, men who actually have lived the stories that are printed in magazines like **THRILLING ADVENTURES**.

Sincerely,
Joe Archibald.

Thanks, Joe, for a vivid letter, and if you ever run into Sanders again, tell him we thank him too.

(Continued on page 108)

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(Continued from page 107)

This issue of **THRILLING ADVENTURES** introduces to you a band of men you have all met before in fiction, and one among them whom you are meeting for the first time, Captain Lacey—Lacey of the Legion. We owe his exciting presence in the pages of **THRILLING ADVENTURES** to a man whom all fiction-lovers know—Jackson Cole! Writes Jackson Cole:

Dear Globe Trotter:

If you want to know where I got the story about that adventurous spirit, Captain Lacey, I can tell you that I didn't get it from Lacey himself. Oh, I met him right enough, but he's not the kind who talks about himself.

I ran into him in Tunis, where he was on leave. Evidently he didn't think "leave" was the same as "rest," for he wasn't doing any resting. Do you know what he was doing? He was breaking wild desert horses for an Algerian horse-dealer friend of his. It was mighty queer—seeing a bit of the old bronco-busting West transplanted to Africa!

As I said before, I didn't learn much about Lacey from Lacey, except what I could size up for myself. The dramatic episodes in **LACEY OF THE LEGION** were recounted to me by Lacey's sergeant side-kick.

I considered it a big privilege and good fortune to become acquainted with these two men, members of that body of adventurers so long made famous in song and story.

Sincerely,

Jackson Cole.

The Mailbag

Now that our globe-trotting writers have spoken their pieces, it's time for our globe-trotting readers to talk back. Let's see what we've got in the mail. Here's one from the West:

Dear Globe Trotter:

I wish to become a member of **THE GLOBE TROTTERS' CLUB**. Have just returned from a seven months' trip through 32 states. I stayed five weeks of that time with another fellow I met on the road in the Bitter Root Mountains of Montana, hunting and fishing.

Have been reading your wonderful magazine for three years and think it is the best on the market. I'm going to work here a year and then go through Mexico down to South America. In the meantime, I want to hear from all you globe trotters and will answer every letter.

Yours for more issues and more globe trotters.

Sincerely,

Jim Walker.

16527 S. Vermont, Gardena, Calif.

More power to you in your globe trotting, Jim, and we appreciate your appreciation of **THRILLING ADVENTURES**.

From the West we now jump to the Middle West.

Dear Globe Trotter:

My travels have been rather limited, but I have a large collection of pictures from spots I have traveled to.

I would like to correspond with fellow globe trotters who are interested in my hobby, photography.

THRILLING ADVENTURES is still tops with me. Keep up the good stories, especially the western and jungle ones.

Sincerely,

Everet Parks.

3207 N. Arsenal, Indianapolis, Ind.

Here's one from a summertime wanderer,

Dear Globe Trotter:

I manage a bowling alley, so I have the whole summer to travel around in. I have traveled over

most of the South, Middle West, and West. Would gladly answer all questions on "hoboing," about which I have a good knowledge. I think THRILLING ADVENTURES is swell.

Edward L. Collins.
1824 Lorimer, Denver, Colorado.

By the time your letter is in print, Ed, I guess you'll be hitting the open road, but no doubt you'll pick up the August issue of THRILLING ADVENTURES on your way. A whiff of the open sea is in our next letter:

Dear Globe Trotter:

As a member of your club for several years, I would very much like to get a new membership card, as my card is pretty well worn out.

I have met several persons throughout the world who are members, and was always treated as a friend by them rather than a stranger.

I was master on the schooner *Beloite* when she was rammed two years ago, and narrowly escaped being killed.

I am not yet thirty and have been traveling nearly sixteen years.

If any of the readers care to write, I will tell them of some of my experiences in strange places.

Thanking you for a wonderful magazine, I remain. Sincerely yours,

Captain Warren Fitzsimmons.
71 Summer St., So. Walpole, Mass.

From thirty we jump to thirteen:

Dear Globe Trotter:

I enjoy reading your magazine very much, and although I am only thirteen years old I would like to join the Globe Trotters' Club. (Okay.—Ed.) I like adventure stories of all kinds, especially those about airplanes. My favorite hobbies are drawing and coin collecting.

Sincerely yours,
Merrill Holden.

5524 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, Ill.

Join Our Club

Concerning the above letter, all are welcome to join the GLOBE TROTTERS' (Continued on page 110)

The Globe Trotter,
THRILLING ADVENTURES,
22 West 48th Street,
New York City.

I wish to be enrolled as a member of the *Globe Trotters' Club*. I am interested in adventure and will endeavor to answer all questions asked me by other members regarding the places with which I am familiar.

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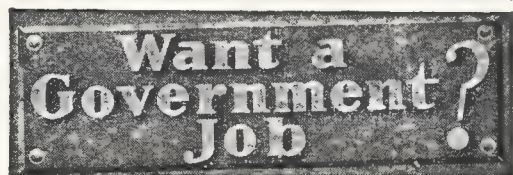
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(Continued from page 109)

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Flash! **SIEGE OF SWORDS**, by Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson! A novel about men-at-arms, struggling against the deadly brood of the Borgias! An epic vividly depicting a hero's struggles to free a city! Romance, heroic action, breath-taking adventure! All these are in **SIEGE OF SWORDS**! Don't miss it!

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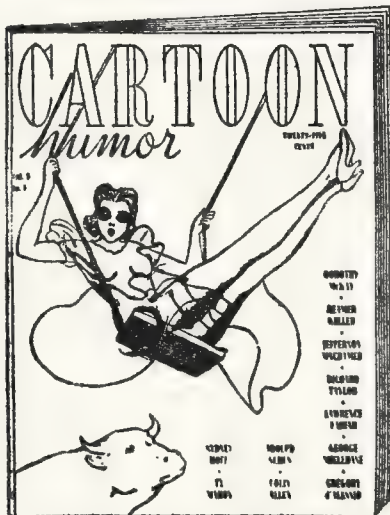
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DEATH HAUNTS THE ICEFIELD

(Continued from page 105)

As the stars broke in a clearing sky, Chug seemed to sense that he had reached the end of his fighting career. He mouthed new sounds, sharp barks, and horrible grunts as he lashed his squat shape about in a mad fury.

BUT Yanu was ready. Her steel-spring muscles bunched under her, then catapulted. She came smashing down on the broad back of her cub killer, her fangs driving hard into that thick walrus hide.

Nanook rushed and struck at Chug's ugly snout, laying it open. His heavy weight sent the big one off balance, down again on that mangled, crushed flipper.

Massing all his great strength, Chug roared and drove forward at Nanook. It was his supreme effort. Nanook whirled with the speed of a white fox and drove deep for that gaping wound in the walrus king's side.

Though inexperienced, the young bears instinctively sensed what was expected of them. They rushed to harass Chug's front.

Now Yanu whirled and snapped fiercely at Nanook, whose tusks were cutting deep into Chug's side. Chug half rolled again. He shook his monstrous head, catching one of the young bears a glancing blow across the forelegs. But Chug was almost done.

Yanu sprang from his back and lunged at Nanook, who seemed to understand the frenzy of this old bear who had lost her cubs. Like lightning, Yanu spun and drove at the gaping maw of slobbery blubber in Chug's side. Deeper—deeper, her fangs drove in, until at last her massive jaws began to close.

With a deep, gurgled bawl, Chug flopped on to his port side. He rolled and attempted to thresh a few strokes with his sound flipper, but at a sudden upward jerk of Yanu's powerful head,

he slumped and lay still. Chug's fighting soul flitted out, bound for that Valhalla of his ancestors.

Yanu backed off to join Nanook in the weaving death patrol around the conquered. Suddenly, Yanu wheeled on Nanook, and backed him off. Hers had been the kill; hers the conquest. Nanook swayed away, while Yanu continued to circle, mouthing her snarls and growls of conquest.

Growling softly, Nanook joined her to begin the feast; the young bears content to gorge on the calf. . . .

At last, Yanu yawned, and backed her overstuffed form away from the carcass. She got to her haunches and stretched her long neck to sniff off to seaward. Swinging sharply, she struck at Nanook. His usefulness was at an end. Yanu preferred to hunt alone, until the soft moon waxed.

SLOWLY, reluctantly, Nanook backed off, mouthing his anger. Yanu was queen of the ice floes. Her temper, tonight, was extremely savage.

Nanook dropped into the water and struck out, to be followed by the young ones. He would seek out his own favorite hunting grounds.

Yanu was at last alone. She licked her chops and for a long moment blinked evilly down on the Gargantuanlike shape of Chug. Then blowing sonorously, she began to chortle her contentment. Backing with that characteristic weaving, swaying motion of the great white bears, she took cover in the bowl of the ice hummocks. Her nose into the light night wind, she subsided to sleep. Yanu was at last happy again.

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28x4.75-21	2.50	1.25	1.37	3.25	1.35	42x1 1/2	3.95 1.75
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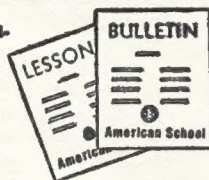
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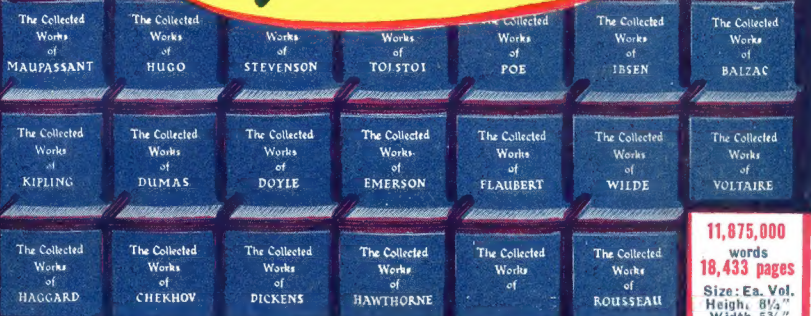
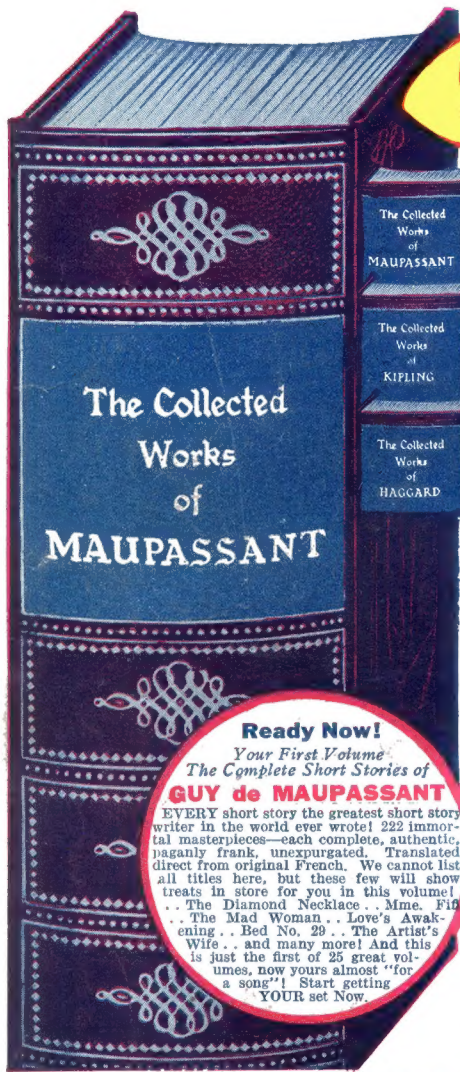
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